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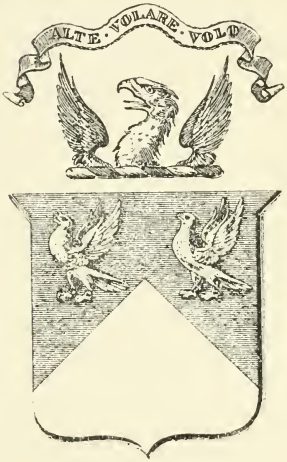

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THE PRIME MINISTERS OF ENGLAND

EDITED BY

STUART J. REID

THE EARL OF ABERDEEN

THE

PRIME MINISTERS of ENGLAND

A SERIES OF POLITICAL BIOGRAPHIES

EDITED BY

STUART J. REID

Author of "THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SYDNEY SMITH"

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THE EARL OF
ABERDEEN

BY

LORD STANMORE

Let Princes and States choose such ministers as are more sensible of Duty than of Rising; and such as love Businesse rather upon Conscience than upon Bravery.

Bacon, "Of Ambition."

THIRD EDITION

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HENRY MORSE STEPHENS

TO

MARY

COUNTESS DOWAGER OF ABERDEEN

THESE PAGES ARE DEDICATED

511868

PREFATORY NOTE

It was with reluctance that I consented to write this book, when requested to do so by Mr. Stuart Reid, for the events of Lord Aberdeen's life and the nature of his character were such as render it peculiarly difficult to do justice to them within the limits of a short biography. I am conscious, moreover, that the appearance of such a volume must materially diminish the interest and value of any future publication of Lord Aberdeen's Correspondence—a duty entrusted to me by the terms of my father's will.

Nevertheless, as, to complete the series of 'Lives of the Prime Ministers of Queen Victoria,' a Life of Lord Aberdeen must in any case have been written, I thought that it was, on the whole, better that the task should be undertaken by me than by someone having no personal knowledge of the subject of the Memoir.

The misgivings with which I began my work have been fully justified. The narrow compass within which the volumes of this series are necessarily confined has compelled me to omit much of importance to a true understanding of Lord Aberdeen's character, and to content myself with assertion where I should have desired to adduce documentary proof. Full materials for a true appreciation of Lord Aberdeen himself, or for an accurate knowledge

of the events in which he took part, will not exist until the publication of the Correspondence above referred to. The longer I consider what I have now written, the more sensible I become of its faults and shortcomings.

> The beauties to th' original I owe,
> Which, when I miss, my own defects I show.

It is my duty humbly to acknowledge the permission graciously accorded by Her MAJESTY THE QUEEN to publish the letter printed at page 291.

My thanks are also due to Mr. GLADSTONE for leave to make use of the extracts from his letters which are to be found in different parts of the volume; as well as to Mrs. C. BARING for permission to quote those of her father, Sir JAMES GRAHAM.

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LORD ABERDEEN

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS: 1784–1812

The Gordon Family—Lord Aberdeen's Childhood—Names Pitt and Dundas his Guardians—Harrow and Cambridge—Travels in the Levant—Bentley Priory—Marriage—Death of Mr. Pitt—Opening of Public Life—Death of Lady Aberdeen—Letter to Gurney.

THAT Bertrand de Gourdon, by whose arrow King Richard I. was killed before the Castle of Chalus in Perigord, left children who settled in Scotland and became the progenitors of the House of Gordon, is a proposition which I should hesitate to affirm; but it is one which, in the presence of other members of that House, I should equally hesitate to deny. The legend may not be altogether without foundation. The period to which it relates is not so remote as to be beyond the age of credible tradition. But no records in fact exist of the first settlement of the family in the South of Scotland, and the authentic evidence of charters points to its establishment there at a period long anterior to the commencement of the thirteenth century; the time at which, according to the received tradition, the children of Bertrand de Gourdon must have sought that country as refugees and adventurers. The migration northward of the

family in the fourteenth century, and the gradual acquisition, by its head, of territorial possessions from the German Ocean to the Atlantic, in which he exercised all but uncontrolled power, can be more clearly traced. The direct male descent of the senior branch of the family came to an end in 1402. Its heiress married Alexander Seton, who assumed the Gordon name. This second family of Seton-Gordon, the male descent of which is still represented by the Marquess of Huntly, also came to an end, so far as its direct line was concerned, on the death of the last Duke of Gordon in 1836, when a great portion of his vast estates devolved on the son of the Duke's eldest sister the Duchess of Richmond, in favour of whose grandson, the present Duke of Richmond, the dukedom of Gordon has lately been revived by the Queen. More than half a century, however, before the marriage of the heiress of the Gordons with Alexander Seton, a cadet of the family was established as Laird at Haddo in Aberdeenshire, and from him, in unbroken and direct male descent, springs the present Earl of Aberdeen. As a rule, these Lairds of Haddo were a tough and exceedingly long-lived race. Excepting those who came to a violent end on the battle-field or the scaffold, there were few of them who did not attain or exceed the allotted age of man. Sir John Gordon, a distinguished Cavalier leader, was created a baronet of Nova Scotia by Charles I. His castle of Kellie was besieged by the Marquess of Argyll, and forced to surrender in consequence of the desertion of the artillerymen engaged in its defence. Sir John himself was taken as a prisoner to Edinburgh, and there beheaded in July 1644, being the first person judicially executed for adherence to the Royal cause. His second son, Sir George, who succeeded to the title and estates on the death of

his elder brother, was by Charles II. created Earl of Aberdeen and appointed Lord High Chancellor. That office was in Scotland usually held as one purely political by some great nobleman possessing no knowledge of law. Lord Aberdeen, who had begun life as a younger son, had been bred to the bar, and obtained considerable credit by his judicial decisions as Chancellor. He declared, as a judge, that the orders of the Privy Council rendering husbands and fathers responsible by fine and imprisonment for the opinions of their wives and daughters, could not be carried out under any existing statute, and he declined, as a minister, to propose any alteration in the law. On being told by the King that he 'would be served in his own manner, and according to his own measures,' Lord Aberdeen at once resigned the Great Seal. On the Revolution he retired from public life, to the regret of William III., to whom he had been represented as 'the solidest statesman in Scotland.' He remained a nonjuror till the accession of Queen Anne, when he again took the oaths. Like so many others of his family, he lived to a great age, dying in 1720, seventy-six years after the execution of his father. His son William, when Lord Haddo, had been elected, after the Union, to the Parliament of Great Britain, as member for Aberdeenshire, but the election was, after much debate, set aside in 1714, on the plea that the eldest sons of peers had not been allowed to sit in the Scottish Parliament, and were therefore ineligible for Scottish seats in that of the United Kingdom. Lord Haddo was a decided Jacobite, and perhaps more attention was given by the House of Commons to that fact than to the principles of constitutional law, which were somewhat strained by the decision. Earl William married successively a daughter of the Duke of Athol and a daughter of the Duke of Gordon, and

it may be supposed that neither of these alliances weakened his attachment to the House of Stuart. He talked a good deal of joining the Pretender in 1745, but though his mind had been nearly made up by the early successes of Prince Charles, he was still only talking about it when, fortunately for the interests of the family, he died somewhat suddenly. His eldest son and successor, George, had, according to the prudent custom then prevalent in great Scottish families, been bred a Whig, and at once declared his adhesion to George II. He died in 1801, when over eighty, surviving his eldest son, George, Lord Haddo. Lord Haddo had married, in 1782, Charles Baird, daughter of William Baird, of Newbyth, and sister of the well-known general, Sir David Baird. Their eldest son, another George, the subject of the present memoir, was born at Edinburgh January 28, 1784.

Lord Haddo died suddenly, October 2, 1791. After his death his widow removed to England, taking with her the boy George, who received his earliest education in a school at Barnet (where Lady Haddo lived), and subsequently at Parsons Green. Lady Haddo never recovered the shock of her husband's sudden death, and lived in great retirement and dejection. She pined during some four years, and died in 1795. By her death her children were left in a position which, for their rank in life, was one of singular dreariness and isolation. Lady Haddo had incurred Lord Aberdeen's displeasure by the well-grounded disapproval she had expressed of his mode of life, and had been regarded by him with open enmity. He had wholly neglected, and rather disliked, a grandson whose interests were incompatible with those, to the promotion of which by the purchase of estates wholly at his own disposal, the later years of his life were devoted. He had, indeed,

been persuaded, or coerced, by powerful friends to send the young Lord Haddo to Harrow, but there his intervention ended. He would perform none of the duties towards his grandchildren which naturally devolved on him, and in this condition of things other relations appear to have been afraid or unwilling to interfere. The boy George, then between eleven and twelve years old, finding a respectful application to his grandfather wholly unheeded, invoked the intervention of Henry Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville, and at that time all-powerful in Scotland. With him Lord Haddo had been well acquainted, and to him Lady Haddo had occasionally turned, and not in vain, for counsel and support. He at once responded to the boy's appeal, moved, no doubt, by compassion for the seven orphan and deserted children, the eldest of whom was not twelve years of age and the youngest barely four. Perhaps also he was not wholly unmindful of the advantage of bringing under his influence one of the most powerful families in the North of Scotland. The young Lord Haddo found a home in Dundas's house, and his only sister, Alicia, lived for the next thirty years, as a daughter, with Lady Jane Dundas, under whose maternal care all the children for a time came. As the five younger brothers grew up, two, William and John, entered the navy, and both lived to attain the rank of admiral. Two others, Alexander and Charles, obtained commissions in the army. Of these, the former was a favourite aide-de-camp of the Duke of Wellington, and gave early promise of distinction, being already a lieutenant-colonel and a K.C.B., when killed at Waterloo at the age of twenty-eight. Charles also became a K.C.B., and died colonel of the Black Watch in 1835. Of the career of the remaining brother, Robert, who entered the diplomatic service, we shall hear more in the later part of this volume.

There was no more frequent visitor at Dundas's Wimbledon villa than Mr. Pitt. He from the first evinced the keenest interest in the young Lord Haddo, and that interest continually increased as the boy grew older. Meanwhile his education was not neglected. At Harrow he devoted himself chiefly to Greek scholarship, in which he obtained distinction. He was a quiet and studious boy, taking little part in the games of the school. But he was an omnivorous reader, and before he left Harrow he possessed a better acquaintance with the Italian poets than most men acquire in a lifetime. He had also read a large portion of such works relative to the modern history of Europe as were then attainable. Among his schoolfellows and friends were many of those more or less associated with his subsequent career.

When the boy reached the age of fourteen he availed himself of the right given by the Scotch law to one of that age to name his own 'curators' or guardians. He nominated in that capacity Mr. Pitt, then Prime Minister, and Henry Dundas. They accepted the charge, and thenceforward the lad lived with them alternately. He and Lady Hester Stanhope were the only young inmates of Mr. Pitt's house, and it is significant that in the 'Memoirs of Lady Hester Stanhope,' as recorded by her doctor, Lord Aberdeen is never mentioned. Had she not retained at the bottom of her heart some lurking kindness for the companion of her early years, he would hardly have escaped that merciless outpouring of misanthropical satire which she so freely bestowed on all other acquaintances of her youth, save her brothers and Sir John Moore.

When the time drew near for his leaving Harrow, Lord Haddo proposed to continue his studies at the University of Cambridge. He met with an unlooked-for obstacle in the

positive refusal of his grandfather to furnish him with the means of indulging what he deemed a needless extravagance. Lord Haddo's curators were, however, of a different mind, and Lord Haddo himself, as Mr. Pitt tersely informed Lord Aberdeen, 'did not concur with his lordship in considering that rank superseded the necessity for education.' From a letter written by Lord Melville it appears that the curators threatened Lord Aberdeen that, if he would not provide for his grandson's education and other wants, they would themselves advance what was required from their own personal funds. Whether Lord Aberdeen submitted to the disgrace of allowing them to do so, or listened to wiser counsels, I am not aware, but at all events Lord Haddo entered at St. John's College, Cambridge, in June 1800. His grandfather died in the following year. At that time not only did the vicious practice of granting degrees to noblemen without examination prevail, but they were actually precluded from presenting themselves for examination, even when desirous of so doing. The industry or idleness of a young peer consequently depended wholly on himself. Lord Aberdeen, however, did not require any external stimulus to work. He read largely during his stay at Cambridge, and while there collected a fine library, consisting chiefly of early or rare editions of the classics and of early Italian poetry. He pursued his Greek studies, and made himself a good Latinist. But his inclination led him to the study of modern history and to bypaths of literature, especially that of the Renaissance. In his correspondence with his friend, Hudson Gurney, I find such passages as the following:

April 18, 1802.—I waited till I had read over again the poem 'De Immortalitate Animi,' which I thought was by Vida, but I find the author is Aonius Palearius, his intimate friend and pupil. The composition possesses, no doubt, great merit, but

I do not think it would repay the time given up to translate it. The only books of Vida of any importance are the 'Christiad,' translated tolerably by a Mr. Thomson; the 'Scacchia Ludus,' well done by Murphy; and the 'Bombyces,' which, so far as I know, is not translated at all. Many parts of it are extremely beautiful, and it abounds with lively and picturesque description, but I am bold to say, if I were you, I would not undertake its translation. . . . I will in some sort defend Vida when we meet, but meanwhile do you read Sannazarius. You will be pleased with him, and also with Fracastorius. You mentioned you had been translating Propertius. Do send me a packet; you shall have my sincere opinions and humble addenda and corrigenda. Have you translated those eight lines from the elegy in the second book where he relates that he dreamed Cynthia was shipwrecked? I do not mention the number of the elegy, for I have only an Aldus edition, where they are very badly arranged, and often not separated at all. I think them very pretty.

These, it must be remembered, are the familiar letters of a lad of eighteen to a friend little older, not the notes of a recluse scholar. How many undergraduates of the present day have read Vida, or know that such a writer ever existed? It must be confessed, however, that their ignorance involves no great loss.

Lord Aberdeen's chief friends at Cambridge were Lord Royston, whose early death Lord Aberdeen always regarded as a grave public misfortune, and a young Fellow of St. John's, the Rev. G. Whittington, one of the earliest intelligent admirers and students of Gothic architecture, on which, as it exists in the North of France, he wrote a volume, not perhaps altogether meriting the oblivion which has overtaken it. Another of his closest intimates was Hudson Gurney, a member of the great Quaker family of that name, but himself a Churchman. Very rich and very benevolent, but having no sufficient stimulus to exertion, Mr. Gurney's fine abilities were to a great extent squandered on dilettante pursuits, which, while they occupied him, he affected—not perhaps untruly—to despise. His intimacy and correspond-

ence with Lord Aberdeen, whom he survived, lasted over sixty years. That singular genius, Henry Drummond, not unlike Gurney in his fine taste, keen perceptions, and contemplative rather than active attitude in life, but very unlike him in most other points, was also one of those with whom Lord Aberdeen was in most intimate relations.

The Peace of Amiens reopened the Continent to English travellers, and in the autumn of 1802 Lord Aberdeen visited Paris. Young though he was, one so nearly connected with Mr. Pitt, even though the great minister was at the moment out of office, was not a person to be neglected, and he was the object of much attention. Lord Aberdeen dined several times at Malmaison, almost in private, and had much conversation with the First Consul, whose genius and career had captivated his imagination, and by whose singular beauty he was fascinated. I have often heard him say that Napoleon's smile was the most winning he ever saw, and that his eye was wholly unlike that of any other man. He proceeded on the ordinary tour through the South of France to Italy, and whilst at Florence spent some interesting evenings at the house of the Pretender's widow, the Countess of Albany. At one end of the room sat the Countess with her bevy of visitors; at the other, cloaked and hatted, sat Alfieri, alone, and apparently unnoticed by the little court around the Countess. To him Lord Aberdeen ventured to address himself, and the poet found in him an acquaintance with Italian literature and a facility in the use of the language to which he was not accustomed in British visitors. Contrary to his usual custom he entered readily into conversation, and encouraged Lord Aberdeen to return for its renewal on subsequent days.

But a visit to the more civilised parts of Europe did not content Lord Aberdeen. Full of the Greek classics, he was bent on travelling in the Levant, and at length extorted from

Mr. Pitt and Lord Melville a somewhat reluctantly accorded permission to do so.

At Malta, Lord Aberdeen joined the new British Ambassador to the Porte, Mr. Drummond, and accompanied him to Constantinople. The Embassy pursued its way in the most leisurely manner, touching at almost every island of the Ægean in its route. After at length reaching Constantinople Lord Aberdeen spent some time there, and then, having obtained the necessary firmans, left the Embassy, and proceeded on a prolonged journey through Greece and Asia Minor. Travelling in the Levant was not then the easy matter it now is, and Lord Aberdeen's wanderings were attended with much hardship and not infrequent danger. After a considerable stay at Athens, during which he rediscovered and excavated the Pnyx, he crossed over to Smyrna, and thence visited Ephesus and other points in Asia Minor. He returned to Greece and very thoroughly explored the Morea and Albania, then seldom visited by Englishmen. Passing over from thence to Corfu, he returned home after an absence of two years, by way of Dalmatia, Venice, Vienna, and the North of Germany. During his travels in the East, Lord Aberdeen kept a careful and often very copious journal, from which, were my space less limited, I could have desired to make some extracts. His conversations with Sir Alexander Ball at Malta are there recorded with great minuteness, and are of much interest, as is also his account of an audience of the Sultan Selim. His visits to sites then all but unknown, in the Peloponnesus and Epirus, are carefully recorded, and with the notes made by him of the then condition of the Parthenon, and of his excavations at Ephesus, Athens, and many other places, possess considerable archæological value, as do also the careful copies taken by him of a very

large number of inscriptions, many of which have since disappeared.

Not the least curious incident related in this journal is his reception by Ali Pasha, of Janina, who spoke to him freely of his aims, and entrusted him with a letter to Mr. Pitt, whose support the Pasha was eager to obtain in the pursuit of his ambitious projects.

After his return to England, in 1804, Lord Aberdeen lived, as before, with Mr. Pitt and Lord Melville, until he attained his majority. This he did on January 28, 1805. On that occasion he went down to Haddo House to take possession of his estates and receive the congratulations of his tenants and neighbours. He had not revisited Aberdeenshire since he left it as a child of eight years old, with a child's illusions as to the surroundings of a home which has been his world. He was wholly unprepared for the rough awakening which awaited him, and on the rare occasions on which he could be induced to speak of his own early days, he dwelt with great force on the sensations he experienced when brought face to face with the reality before him. The backward condition of agriculture, the miserable dwellings and half-savage habits of the people, the ignorance and coarseness of the gentry, the inclemency of the climate, the ugliness and monotony of the country —bare, undulating, and treeless—were all very unlike his dreams, and filled him with dismay. Wild ideas of breaking the entail and disposing of the property gave way before the consciousness that it was impossible to realise them. They were succeeded by intentions of permanent absenteeism, and it was not until after days of mental conflict that his eagerness to escape gave place to the conviction that it was his duty not to abandon but to improve the territorial possessions to which he owed his place in the

world; not to desert those living under his influence, but to aid them in their progress upward to civilisation and comfort. Having adopted this conviction, he did not shrink from the duties it imposed. He drained, he planted, he built. Tracts of moorland became fields of corn, new schools rose in every parish, new buildings on every farm. Few knew the sacrifice of tastes and inclination involved in his adoption of Haddo as an habitual summer residence. For many years it was in the highest degree repugnant to him. But in spite of inclination he persevered.

Something of the dismay he felt may be traced in a letter to Hudson Gurney, written from Haddo three or four days after his majority. After telling him that he had 'feasted about eight or nine hundred neighbours, as well as the principal gentlemen of the county,' and had been 'immersed, not in Greek' (as Gurney supposed), 'but in Port and Claret'; he adds: 'Greece is before my eyes: my right hand points to India, and my left to St. Petersburg. . . . I am confined to the house by a sore throat and cough. If I were stretched at ease under the shadowy branches of the olive grove on the banks of the Ilissus, it would do more than all remedies. After your severe illness, the mild sun of Italy and Greece will surely tempt you to desert our cold and cheerless sky.'

The scene before him was certainly 'cold and cheerless.' The short lime avenue before the house terminated in a dreary and extensive peat-moss, which lay stretched between it and the grim high walls of a distant deer park. Snipe were to be shot in the marshy swamp which reached to the foot of the garden terrace. Stacks of fuel and sheds of lumber were piled against the walls of the house itself, the 'appalling badness' of which, he wrote, was 'only equalled by the desolation of the exterior.' The neigh-

bouring lairds, not excluding the few peers who lived almost wholly in the county, were uneducated and boorish, and had little in common with 'Athenian Aberdeen.'

Though now of age, and his own master, Lord Aberdeen continued to live chiefly with Mr. Pitt, and his entrance into society was effected under the auspices of Mr. Pitt's friends and those of Lord Melville and the Duchess of Gordon. Among those to whose notice Lord Aberdeen was specially commended by Mr. Pitt was John James, Marquess of Abercorn, a man who never sitting in a Cabinet or accepting office, nevertheless by virtue of the possession of rank and wealth, at the command of shrewd ability, exercised no inconsiderable influence on affairs, and was consulted by ministers and by the sovereign. In his youth Lord Abercorn's accession to the title had not been anticipated, but his handsome person, his great strength, and the boldness and frequency of his adventures of gallantry had made him at an early age a marked figure in society. Mr. Pitt had a very high opinion of his talents, and, according to Walter Scott, declared that had Lord Abercorn remained a commoner he would have become one of the most distinguished speakers of the lower house. As a peer he was remarkable for pride and stateliness, but in the brilliant society which he gathered round him literature and art held at least as high a place as rank and power. The imperious owner of Bentley Priory and those who habitually assembled there have been sketched by Sir Walter Scott in a now forgotten article of the 'Quarterly Review.' The picture is an attractive one. The Sheridans, Walter Scott himself, Lawrence the painter, Kemble the actor, Payne Knight the antiquary, were among the most constant and familiar guests, and to Lord Aberdeen the Priory soon became almost a home.

After what has been said of Lord Aberdeen's studious habits, the reader may be surprised to learn that one of his favourite recreations while at Cambridge was acting. Silent, shy, and sensitive, the personation of another seemed to give him a confidence which naturally he did not possess. On one occasion he and two friends presented themselves under assumed names to the manager of the theatre at Canterbury, and were engaged by him to perform the principal parts in Shakespeare's tragedy of 'King John.' Their success was complete, and the manager showed anxiety to retain them in his company, offering Lord Aberdeen a liberal salary if he would only enter into an engagement for the entire season. Lord Aberdeen was therefore a welcome recruit for the private theatre at the Priory. I have now before me the cast of the characters for several of the pieces performed there. In that for the tragedy of 'Oronoko,' in which there are but eleven male parts, I have found among the actors two Prime Ministers (Lord Aberdeen and Lord Melbourne), two Ambassadors at Vienna (Sir R. Gordon and Lord Beauvale), Sir Thomas Lawrence, and Mr. T. Sheridan.

The eldest daughter of Lord Abercorn, Lady Catherine Hamilton, was one of those bright and rare beings who seem rather to rest on the earth's service than to belong to it. Her graceful form, full of restless life, her stately bearing and eager passionate face have been preserved to us by Lawrence in more than one of his most pleasing works. But though the fire and animation of the mobile features are shown upon his canvas, it is evident that their beauty, great as it is, must have been enhanced by the constant play of varying expression over them: the *Lampeggia dell' angelico riso* which goes so far to form love's paradise. To his friends, Lawrence whispered that his fortune would have

been made if he could have dared to paint, as the embodiment of scorn, her attitude and expression, as with half-averted head and outstretched arm she allowed the Princess of Wales to fasten an armlet above her elbow. Many of her letters to her father have been preserved, which show the bright and sportive joyousness of her character; but it had also a stronger side. With her Lord Aberdeen fell passionately in love, and she with him. There was nothing to impede his suit, and they were married July 28, 1805. Lord Aberdeen worshipped her with the most ardent devotion, and found in her society a happiness he had never known or imagined, which was all the more appreciated from its contrast to his previous solitary and forlorn condition. Kind as his guardians had been, the dependence on strangers had been bitter to him. He had known no home, none on whom freely to lavish his strong affection, and he had early learned to repress all outward signs of feeling. For a few short years his happiness was now brilliant and unclouded. It was then lost for ever.

Lord Aberdeen's marriage made no difference in his relations with Mr. Pitt. The impeachment of Lord Melville and his removal from office had deprived Lord Aberdeen of one powerful friend, but Mr. Pitt's solicitude on his behalf was only increased thereby. Mr. Pitt lived at this time at Bowling Green House, Putney, and at his request the young couple took up their residence at Lord Melville's villa at Wimbledon, which was lent, or let, by him to Lord Aberdeen.

Under the auspices of the all-powerful minister, Lord Aberdeen's prospects of early distinction were of the brightest character. He was promised an English peerage during the ensuing session, and no doubt existed of his early entrance into high office. But Mr. Pitt's life was

drawing towards its close, and on January 23, 1806, he expired. Lord Aberdeen writes thus in a diary which he commenced the following day:

Jan. 24, 1806.—I received on the evening of the 22nd a note from Lord Melville intimating that his death might be expected; and on the morning of the 23rd I was informed that he was no more, having expired at a quarter-past four that morning. From my having lived with him on terms of the utmost intimacy from my childhood, from his having been my guardian, and from his constant affection for me, the dismay and affliction I suffered, and still do suffer, being absorbed in individual feeling, render me comparatively callous and insensible to considerations of a public nature. Yet the idea is dreadful. Lord Melville breakfasted with me this morning on his return to Bath. He embraced me with tears, and for some time could not speak. We at last expatiated on the dreadful calamity which we and the country had sustained. I never witnessed grief more poignant; he almost wished a general apathy to come upon him as the only relief, and declared that, if he lived a hundred years, it would be impossible to remain an hour without having the image of Mr. Pitt in his mind. He was glad to hasten out of this house, where every object recalled him.

To his friend Whittington he wrote on the same day:

Mr. Pitt is no more. The country has lost its only support in this dreadful time of disasters, and I have lost the only friend to whom I looked up with unbounded love and admiration. Why are you absent? Not that I can tell you anything, but Lord Melville was here this morning in absolute despair. Everybody in the streets looks as if they had lost a father and protector; and they are right, for so they have. He was sensible till a short time before he died, which he did with perfect resignation. He continued, when senseless, to talk, and wished to write to the Foreign Office and the Treasury. But why do I expatiate on anything so distressing! To think that I am now writing at a table where I have seen him a thousand times, and how seen him!—is indeed agony.

A few days later he writes from London:

Great as my distress has been, I have been obliged to console others. Lady Melville is in despair at the situation of Lord Melville. I, who know the strength of his mind and of his nerves, am able to estimate the misery of his condition, when he declares that for the first time in his life he looks in vain for any resource within himself. We are come here for a few days, but mean very soon to return to Wimbledon. I am

much more composed since I left it, for there every object tended to provoke grief. Being so near the spot where he lived, my imagination pictured him before my eyes the whole night, and totally deprived me of sleep while I staid.

Lord Aberdeen was impatient to take his place in Parliament. The English peerage, which he had been led to anticipate, was now no longer attainable. Was it impossible that he should obtain a seat in the House of Commons? Peers, though disqualified from voting at other elections, did not consider themselves forbidden to do so at those of Members for the Universities. Lord Aberdeen argued that, not being a Peer of Parliament, he must be qualified to represent a constituency in which he was qualified to vote, and he proposed to offer himself as a candidate for the seat vacated by Mr. Pitt. The transaction is thus recorded in his diary:

Jan. 25.—I received a letter from Henry Petty informing me of his intention of offering himself as a candidate for the University of Cambridge, and requesting my vote. In answer I told him that, if I possessed a vote, the same qualification would probably enable me to offer myself, which in that case I certainly should do.

Jan. 26.—My express returned from Cambridge, and brought me the good wishes of the University, and regrets, which I really believe to be sincere, at my inability to offer myself. Dr. Turner, Mr. Pitt's old master, and at present Vice-Chancellor, wrote in particular to say that I should have had his cordial support. Had it been possible there is no reason to doubt my success.

The death of Mr. Pitt and the disgrace of Lord Melville of course materially affected Lord Aberdeen's position, but he was still regarded as a young man certain to rise, even without the adventitious aids which he had lost. Canning offered him in 1807 the Embassy to Sicily, then a post of considerable importance, which, however, he declined, unless allowed the same control over the Sicilian Government which had till then been exercised by the British Ambassador, but which it was now intended to discontinue. At

the first dissolution of Parliament which followed his majority he was elected one of the sixteen representative peers of Scotland, and in 1808, at the age of twenty-four, he received the ribbon of the Thistle. In the following year he refused the Embassy to Russia, the offer of which to so young a man speaks highly of the estimation in which he was held. Nor was he regarded as a man likely to be conspicuous in public life only. He obtained yet more consideration from his artistic tastes, knowledge, and literary culture. The excavator of the Pnyx was speedily elected to the Presidency of the Society of Antiquaries. He became a Trustee of the British Museum, a Fellow of the Royal Society, and a leading member of all associations for the promotion of art and literature. He wrote in the 'Edinburgh Review,' and though not a frequent speaker in the House of Lords, took part in all the more intimate discussions, out of Parliament, of Mr. Pitt's remaining political friends. But in truth he was too much engrossed by domestic life to care very deeply for public employment or affairs. The happiness of his home was enhanced by the birth of three daughters—Jane, Caroline and Alice, born in 1807 and the two following years. A son born in 1810 survived his birth only a few hours. In that year, Lady Aberdeen, always delicate, began to droop, and after a long illness, during which Lord Aberdeen watched and nursed her with the closest and most unremitting attention, she expired on February 29, 1812. With her the sunshine went out of his life for ever. From the day of her funeral to that of his own death, nearly fifty years later, he constantly wore mourning for her. For more than a year he kept a record in Latin of her almost daily appearance to him in visions. 'Vidi,' 'Vidi, sed obscuriorem;' 'Verissima dulcissima imago;' 'Totâ nocte vidi, ut in vitâ;' 'Verissima

tristissima imago,' are entries which continually recur, and were only brought to a close by the stirring incidents of his Embassy. Those who knew him best thought that in the long passages of Italian poetry which to the close of his life he was wont to murmur half aloud to himself, he was dwelling in fancy on his lost love, and that his strong preference for Petrarch's sonnets was not due wholly to the charm of their versification.

He was now less disinclined than before to accept employment abroad, but refused the mission to the United States offered him in 1812. Had he gone there his conciliatory character makes it not improbable that he would have succeeded in averting the unfortunate war which followed. But, while declining to take an active part in foreign affairs, his attention was still constantly turned to them. Hudson Gurney having in October 1812 asked him his opinion as to the progress of events in Sicily, he replied:

> Some of the things that have been done appear to me clearly good, but others are rather doubtful. To talk of 'giving the British Constitution,' *as such*, is quite nonsense. You must first create the people, the state of society, the whole system by which the British Constitution is kept alive. Give the people more liberty as you see them fit for it; break the power of the nobles; destroy commercial monopoly; introduce justice in taxation; banish venality and corruption from the judicature; all by specific measures, as fast as you please: but to give them a fine sounding *name* will not carry much real good along with it. The thing, if anything is meant by it, must be greatly modified, and by talking about it difficulties are only created which need never have been heard of.

The mission which he did at length consent to undertake will be described in the following chapter.

CHAPTER II

EMBASSY TO GERMANY

Lord Aberdeen accepts Embassy to Austria—His Instructions—Journey to Teplitz—Treaty with Austria—Battle of Leipsic—Negotiations at Frankfort—Advance to the Rhine—Congress of Châtillon—Peace of Paris.

In the spring of 1813 it became probable that Austria, stimulated by the example of Prussia, would attempt to shake off her enforced connection with France. It was an object of the utmost moment to Great Britain that the attitude to be assumed by Austria in such an event should be one, not of neutrality, but of active hostility to Napoleon. Lord Castlereagh accordingly proposed to Lord Aberdeen that he should undertake a mission to Vienna for the purpose of securing the co-operation of the Imperial Court. The offer was declined, partly on public and partly on private grounds. In July, however, 'the urgency of Castlereagh himself, as well as the entreaties of the other ministers,' had, he wrote to Lord Abercorn, become 'so great that it would be affectation to refuse.'

Austria had not yet openly declared herself, nor even finally decided which side to take in the great impending struggle which was to determine the fate of Germany, and it was still possible that in the end she might be found appearing as the ally of France. Lord Aberdeen therefore left England without any official character, but armed with the most ample powers, and furnished with instructions of a

general nature leaving a wide discretion to his action. He was told that, in the opinion of the English Cabinet, no peace would provide adequately for the tranquillity and independence of Europe, which did not confine France within the limits of the Pyrenees, the Alps, and the Rhine; but that if the Powers more immediately interested should prefer a more imperfect arrangement to the risks of a more protracted struggle, Great Britain was on certain conditions ready to assent to such a course. These conditions were the fulfilment of the obligations she had already contracted as to the independence of Sicily and Spain, and the surrender of Norway to Sweden. Lord Aberdeen was also authorised to negotiate with Murat, and to conclude a treaty with him confirming him in the possession of the kingdom of Naples, should his accession to the allied cause prove to be purchasable only at that price; but at the same time he was told that the restoration of Naples to the Bourbon family, and the provision elsewhere of an equivalent dominion for Murat, was an alternative greatly preferred by the British Government.

In the existing state of Europe Lord Aberdeen found himself obliged to take a circuitous route to reach the headquarters of the allied armies, which he was directed to visit before proceeding to Vienna. Sailing from Yarmouth on August 10, in H.M.S. *Cydnus*, he landed at Gottenburg in Sweden on the 14th, and traversing that country for about 300 miles, crossed the Baltic from Ystadt to Stralsund, thence pursuing his still very indirect way through Berlin, Breslau, and Glatz, to Prague.

Lord Aberdeen's almost daily letters to his sister-in-law, Lady Maria Hamilton, give a lively account of this hurried journey. He describes the part of Sweden which he traversed as

quite delightful; it is most beautifully wooded, and the ground varied, as to form, in the most agreeable manner; cultivation is mingled with all the most romantic scenes, which produces an effect to me always peculiarly charming. The woods are chiefly oak, alder, ash, beech, and birch; there are also a good many fir-trees, growing naturally, but not in any great number. We crossed many fine streams, and altogether the country is not very unlike some of the richest parts of the Highlands, excepting the hills, which are small, and not of a particularly good form. The people without exception appear to be the best humoured I ever saw. In passing through a country so rapidly there is not time for much observation, but one cannot be deceived in the honest frankness of their appearance. . . . The roads are excellent, and we travelled fast. My carriage was drawn by half a dozen little long-tailed ponies, that put one in mind of Cinderella and her *attelage*.

After a stormy voyage across the Baltic in a dirty and unseaworthy Swedish packet, and a hurried journey through Pomerania and Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Lord Aberdeen and his party arrived at Berlin between six and seven o'clock on the morning of Monday, August 24.

I had intended (wrote Lord Aberdeen) to take a few hours' rest; but observing, even at that early hour, some appearance of bustle and confusion in the town, I found on inquiry that the French army was really approaching. The scene of agitation and interest was soon at its height; the French army was ascertained to be about twelve or sixteen English miles from the town; the Crown Prince had taken up his position near Potsdam; an action was now momentarily expected; the noise of cannon was heard; nothing to be seen but estafettes arriving and departing; officers galloping through the streets; crowds of people collected in all the public places; reports, true or false, spread and collected with equal avidity. I never before witnessed a scene of such powerful interest; it put me in mind of the state of Athens on the approach of Philip to Chæronea.

Notwithstanding his natural desire to await at Berlin the issue of the apparently approaching contest, Lord Aberdeen, on being told by General l'Estocq, the commandant, that there was little hope of the city being saved, and that in the event of the fall of the capital his communication with Frankfort on-the-Oder would be wholly cut off, considered

it his duty at once to start again upon his way. The rest of the journey was marked by repeated overturns, narrow escapes from French outposts, some little danger and much discomfort. On the not unfrequent occurrence of upsets the party often had

to stand in the rain for hours before any assistance could be procured, and which was only afforded very unwillingly; we then had to sit in our wet things in the carriage for the rest of the night. We have more than once spent the day without other food than dry black bread. Our distresses may not be very poetical, or read well on paper, but I assure you they are serious enough in reality.

On his way Lord Aberdeen heard successively that the conferences at Prague, only entered into by Napoleon with a view of gaining time, were at an end; that the armistice had terminated; that Austria had declared war with France on August 17; and that the Emperor and his minister were with the army, the headquarters of which were established at Teplitz. To this place, therefore, Lord Aberdeen's steps were directed, and he arrived there on the 2nd of September.

The allied sovereigns, their ministers, and the diplomatic agents accredited to them, were all gathered together at this small Bohemian town, which had accordingly become 'a focus of intrigues, cabal, and *tracasserie* of every kind.' For miles around were spread the lines of the vast armies of the allies, while a large French force, animated by the frequent presence of Napoleon himself, occupied rising ground within three miles of the town. Affairs of outposts were of daily occurrence, more serious encounters not unfrequent, and a decisive battle was supposed to be impending. 'Every morning we pack up everything, ready to start in case they attack the town,' wrote Lord Aberdeen to Lady Maria.

All thought of mediation had, of course, been aban-

doned, nor was any management longer necessary to bring over Austria to the side of allies with whose forces her own were already united. All that remained was to settle the terms of concert. There was no serious difficulty in the negotiation of such a treaty, which was Lord Aberdeen's first task at Teplitz. It provided that Austria should, until the end of the war, keep on foot an army of not less than 150,000 men, and that Great Britain should pay a subsidy of 1,000,000*l.* in lieu of the armed force which could neither be spared from Spain nor raised in addition to the forces she had already on foot. But it at once occurred to Lord Aberdeen that he might so take advantage of the occasion as to induce Austria to bind herself to pursue the war until the objects, which Great Britain had most at heart, had been attained, and by thus pledging her to a greater extent than Russia or Prussia yet were, might draw on those powers to follow her example. Austria had already concluded a treaty of alliance with Russia and Prussia, but no obligation had been contracted to pursue the war for other objects than the liberation of Germany and the restoration of Hanover to Great Britain. Lord Aberdeen therefore proposed to Count Metternich that, in addition to the treaty of concert and subsidy, a treaty of alliance should be entered into, containing engagements that no peace with France should be concluded which did not secure the complete independence of Spain, Holland, and Italy. To this Metternich readily assented, and the terms of the treaty were finally arranged and settled at Teplitz, of which place it bears the date, although in fact signed at Comotau after the removal thither of the Imperial headquarters. On this treaty, Lord Aberdeen proposed to found a general treaty of alliance, to be at once signed by Austria, Russia, and Prussia, and to be

subsequently acceded to by other powers, as they joined in making common cause against Napoleon.

Lord Aberdeen arrived on the Continent sharing to a great extent the apprehensions of the English Government, which feared that there would be much difficulty in engaging Austria heartily against Napoleon, and believed Metternich's leanings to be altogether French. These suspicions were shared and strengthened by the English ambassadors to Russia and Prussia; but Lord Aberdeen soon perceived that, whatever reluctance might have existed (not unnaturally) on the part of the Emperor Francis to draw the sword against his daughter's husband, or on the part of his minister to incur the resentment of an enemy still so formidable, they both clearly saw that in declaring war with France they had excited against themselves a degree of resentment which Napoleon felt towards no other enemy, and that in the event of his triumph, they would experience the utmost vengeance that it was in his power to inflict. This being so, the complete overthrow or subjugation of Napoleon was indispensably necessary to save Austria from practical annihilation. Every exertion was consequently being made to extend the alliance and to strengthen the Imperial forces. But this the English Government and most of its subordinate agents abroad, who took their cue from the Foreign Office, were slow to perceive, and it was not immediately that Lord Aberdeen's representations produced their full effect. Before Castlereagh himself, however, had left England, he had become convinced that no Power was more in earnest than Austria in a struggle, success in which was essential to her very existence, and that no man was more indifferent to the fate of Napoleon than his father-in-law.

Influenced by the feelings of suspicion above referred

to, Lord Cathcart, at the request of the Emperor of Russia, had concealed from Count Metternich the fact that England had accepted the mediation of Austria, and at the request of Lord Cathcart and Count Nesselrode Lord Aberdeen, in his first communication to Count Metternich of the terms of peace desired by England, did the same. But reflection led him to doubt the propriety of this course. The friendly relations already established with Austria appeared to invite confidence, while it was clear that it would be impossible long to conceal from that Court what was already known to those of Russia, Prussia, and Sweden. Lord Aberdeen therefore informed Metternich of what had taken place, and explained the reasons which had led to the suppression of the intended communication. Metternich received the information with surprise but without displeasure, and admitted that his conduct had been, in appearance, too equivocal to command confidence.

The headquarters of the allies remained at Teplitz for the whole of September. During this time the Austrian reinforcements were hurried forward from all parts of the Empire with the utmost expedition, and by skilful negotiation Bavaria was not only detached from her alliance with France, but engaged to employ an army of 30,000 men against Napoleon, whose communications were thereby imperilled and the right flank of his army endangered. Lord Aberdeen did full justice to the ability shown by Metternich in his treatment of Bavaria, and agreed in the reasoning which led him to advise his master to abstain from resuming the Imperial crown of Germany, as had been wished by Russia, Prussia, and England.

The time spent by him at Teplitz enabled Lord Aberdeen to take a full survey of the existing state of affairs, and become well acquainted with the allied sovereigns,

their generals and ministers. There was no illusion on the part of Austria as to the vital nature of the contest in which she was engaged. That the Emperor of Russia was equally resolute in his hostility to Bonaparte, Lord Aberdeen was disposed to believe, but the Russian generals almost to a man avowed themselves tired of the war and anxious for its conclusion. 'Old Barclay de Tolly,' he wrote, 'talks of returning to Russia on the most trifling occasions, if he has a bad lodging, or anything else as absurd.' The Prince Royal of Sweden, Bernadotte, he found bent solely on promoting his own personal interests, without the least regard to the objects of the alliance. That Napoleon was almost certain to meet with some crushing disaster before he could withdraw the French armies from Germany, Lord Aberdeen believed, but he nevertheless judged that the dissensions of the allied powers were such as to render peace desirable the moment it could be concluded on such terms as to render its permanence probable. Metternich and Nesselrode shared this view, but Prussia, animated by a thirst for vengeance, regarded with impatience all prospects of accommodation.

Magnificent as was the outward appearance of the allied armies, Lord Aberdeen was filled with dismay by the immediate discovery that jealousy and ill-feeling prevailed in the highest degree among those who composed them.

It is impossible (he wrote privately to Castlereagh a few days after reaching Teplitz) to view the state of the fine army by which we are surrounded, with reference to the manner in which it is directed, without the most lively concern and apprehension. Prince Schwartzenberg, after much difficulty and discussion, having been appointed Commander-in-Chief, is after all placed in a situation in which he is invested with scarcely more than nominal authority. Of the merits and claims of Schwartzenberg I know nothing, but I am quite sure that no commander on earth would prove efficient in the situation in which he is placed. The vigour of every measure is

paralysed, the wisdom of the most sagacious proposition rendered almost abortive, by the delay which is necessary to procure the approbation of the different sovereigns and their advisers. The movement made yesterday morning by the greater part of the Austrian army towards Silesia, intended to support Blücher by acting on the right flank of Bonaparte, would have been undertaken eight-and-forty hours sooner had it not been for the difficulty of persuading the Emperor Alexander to agree to the measure. The mutual discontent and ill-will existing in the different armies, which have been increased by the early operations of the campaign, have arrived at a considerable height; and when at last the Austrians marched separately yesterday morning, it was with a joy and acclamation as if they had obtained a victory.

From the first moment of his arrival Lord Aberdeen assumed, or rather was accorded, a position different from that occupied by any of the other British diplomatic agents on the spot, or from that of any other minister accredited to the Austrian Court. This was partly owing to his having come last from England, furnished with the latest views of the British Cabinet. But much must also have been due to his own personal qualities, and especially to that temper of mind which enabled him without effort to place himself in the position of those with whom he was negotiating, and regard questions dispassionately from their point of view—gifts not common among the diplomatists of the time. At all events, however it was accomplished, he certainly succeeded in acquiring with great rapidity the complete confidence both of the Emperor and of his minister. At an early period of the campaign he wrote:

The distinction with which I am treated by the Emperor is without any example in the annals of this proud Court. He has insisted on my dining and supping with him *every* day, and desires me to do so through the whole campaign. I am always placed at his right hand, and both in manner and conversation nothing can be more flattering. Lord Pembroke, or any one who has been at Vienna, will tell you what a total revolution of all his habits this is. Metternich told me that nothing of this sort had ever been. I see him in private when-

ever I please, and discuss everything in the most unreserved manner. Everybody told me I should never hear him speak a word of politics.

It may be that the attentions thus received were not without their influence on Lord Aberdeen's estimate of the character of the Emperor Francis; but, on the other hand, it must be remembered that the intimacy to which he was admitted afforded him opportunities possessed by but few of judging accurately of the real man as distinguished from his mere ordinary appearance. Certainly his opinion of the Emperor, formed at the time, but retained through life, was a far more favourable one than that of many superficial observers. He wrote thus of him at an early stage in the campaign:

His manner *at first* is awkward and rather foolish, arising from great diffidence in himself, and as foreigners seldom know more of him, he has been reckoned weak and ignorant; nothing can be more unjust. I find him a man full of knowledge of every kind, a good Latin scholar, an excellent Italian, well acquainted with their authors and fond of discussing them, and very knowing in all the affairs of his government.

Lord Aberdeen used similar language when writing of the Emperor in the *Quarterly Review* more than thirty years later.

On October 5 the Emperor moved to accompany the allied armies, which had already marched on Dresden and Leipsic in pursuit of the retreating French, and during the whole of this advance Lord Aberdeen was the only diplomatic agent of any nation whom the Emperor kept constantly with him. Other ambassadors might be left to lodge in neighbouring towns, but for Lord Aberdeen a place must always be found in the same village or bivouac as the Emperor. This distinction was not without its drawbacks, and Lord Aberdeen could sometimes have spared the attention. In a letter of October 8 he complains of having had

to relinquish a picturesque and comfortable old house, 'such as you read of in romances, and see sometimes represented on the stage, very irregular, with many passages and corners,' at Saatz (in which town the other members of the *corps diplomatique* were lodged) for a 'delightful abode, consisting of one room, just built, the walls not dry, and without any fireplace,' at Comotau, in order to be with the Emperor.

The journey from Teplitz to Leipsic, and from Leipsic to Frankfort, was performed almost entirely on horseback, and Lord Aberdeen's letters are full of the picturesque scenery and incidents of the route. Metternich, Pozzo di Borgo, and Merfeldt were those who most frequently accompanied him, especially Metternich. One evening he and Metternich, having started late, were benighted.

> The road was execrable (he writes); we lost it, and wandered through woods and fields. We were in the great Thuringian forest, and were very near passing the night under a fir-tree. It was a hard frost, and altogether very unpleasant. At last we discovered a wretched hamlet, but found no quarters there. After much difficulty we got admittance to a hay-loft, where Metternich and I passed the night together.

Both Metternich and Aberdeen were still young men. Daily companionship in the stirring life of a campaign ripened intimacy between them as years of ordinary diplomatic intercourse would not have done, and before reaching Frankfort they had formed a personal friendship far more close than any that usually springs from an ambassador's intercourse with the minister of the Court to which he is accredited.

Such a journey in such company, and at such a time, doubtless had its charms, but the impression which was most deeply fixed on Lord Aberdeen's mind by the scenes around him was that of the calamities which war entails.

Only two days after his arrival at Teplitz he wrote to Lady Maria:

> The near approach of war and its effects are horrible beyond what you can conceive. The whole road from Prague to this place was covered with waggons full of wounded, dead, and dying. The shock and disgust and pity produced by such scenes are beyond what I could have supposed possible at a distance. There are near two hundred thousand men round this town. There is much splendour and much animation in the sight, but the scenes of distress and misery have sunk deeper in my mind. I have been quite haunted by them.

Nor was the impression thus produced in any way blunted, as with many men it was, by greater familiarity. On the contrary, it was only rendered more intense and more painful by every additional day's stay with the army.

Lord Aberdeen though not under fire during the battle of Leipsic, was in the immediate vicinity, and has left an interesting account of the vicissitudes of hope and fear felt during its varied progress. He entered the city on the day following the close of the series of battles which preceded its capture. His letters from the first moment of his arrival at the seat of war are, as has just been mentioned, full of the impression made on him by the sufferings with which he was surrounded, but it was the field of Leipsic which gave him that abhorrence of any but defensive war which he retained for the remainder of his life.

> How shall I describe (he writes to Lady Maria) the entrance to this town? For three or four miles the ground is covered with bodies of men and horses—many not dead, wretches wounded, unable to crawl, crying for water, amidst heaps of putrefying bodies. Their screams are heard at an immense distance, and still ring in my ears. The living, as well as the dead, are stript by the barbarous peasantry, who have not sufficient charity even to put the miserable wretches out of their pain. I will not attempt to say more of this. Our victory is most complete. It must be owned that a victory is a fine thing, but one should be at a distance to appreciate it.

At Leipsic Lord Aberdeen received a mail from England

and had the satisfaction of finding that he had, as to two important subjects, anticipated the wishes of his Government. Lord Castlereagh's letters expressed uneasiness at the concealment of the acceptance of the Austrian mediation, and directed the negotiation of a general treaty of alliance.

During the short halt of the allied forces at Leipsic an incident occurred which I should prefer to pass over in silence, but which, as a conspicuous instance of Lord Aberdeen's placability and command of temper even at that comparatively early period of his life, I cannot omit to notice. General Count Merfeldt was taken prisoner during the battle. He was brought before Napoleon, with whom he had a most important conversation, in which the French Emperor stated the sacrifices he was willing to make for peace. General Merfeldt, who was released on parole, detailed the interview to Sir Robert Wilson, who, 'writing under shell fire,' forwarded full notes of it to Lord Aberdeen. This important missive was entrusted to Sir Robert Wilson's aide-de-camp, an honest blundering officer, very eager to be back in the thick of the battle, and very sulky at being sent off the field, as an estafette, during its progress. Coming across another English diplomatic agent of high rank, before he had succeeded in finding Lord Aberdeen, and apparently thinking one diplomatist as good as another, he gave him the letter for Lord Aberdeen, and galloped back at once to the battle. The accidental recipient of Napoleon's offers forthwith addressed a despatch to Castlereagh, conveying, as from himself, the information he had thus acquired, and instead of handing the letter to Lord Aberdeen when they met, as they did the same evening in Leipsic, retained it until after the messenger had started for England. He then forwarded it to its address. Lord Aberdeen, not knowing that he had been forestalled, himself

wrote a despatch on the subject, and was then told that the news was already gone. The forwarder of the intelligence received the warmest thanks of the Government and substantial reward. Lord Aberdeen, and Sir Robert Wilson, who was not mentioned in the despatch sent, got neither. With most men this would have led to a violent quarrel. Lord Aberdeen felt that any such quarrel between two English ministers, in the presence of strangers, would be out of place, and injurious to the public interest. He preserved uninterruptedly the most friendly and familiar relations with his colleague, and the only expression of his feelings that he permitted himself was the addition of the following postscript to a letter written in terms of accustomed cordiality: 'I hope you repent of your silence to me at Leipsic; it was not fair or friendly, and I am sure could not have been deserved by me.'

The journey from Leipsic to Frankfort was, like that from Teplitz to Leipsic, accomplished chiefly on horseback. It did not diminish Lord Aberdeen's sense of the horrors of war. His letters tell us that the terrible sights through which he passed made it impossible for him to take any pleasure in the beautiful scenery which enchanted his companions.

The whole road to this place (he wrote from Fulda) is scattered with dead. It is not like a field of battle, but single bodies lie by the roadside at such small intervals that we were scarcely a minute or two without a repetition of the object. These poor wretches had dropped down from fatigue, some actually in the middle of the road, and the people had not taken the trouble to remove them to the side, although they had all been not only carefully searched for anything of value they might have had, but the bodies were stripped of every vestige of clothing.

Again, from Gelnhausen:

He [Napoleon] must have lost immense numbers. You have no conception of the road to this place; it is covered with

dead bodies and wretches dying. The bodies were so thick in coming into this town that we actually drove over them. . . . The most affecting sight I think that I ever beheld, I have seen to-day. Houses were burning; the owners of these cottages in the deepest misery, and their children playing around, quite delighted with the fire which consumed the whole property of their parents, and condemned them to cold and hunger. Here is a mixture of innocence and wretchedness which goes to the heart. I do not know when I have felt more severely the wretchedness of mankind.

Lord Aberdeen entered Frankfort on the 6th of November with the Emperor Francis, and was a witness of the enthusiasm with which his return was greeted there.

The streets, windows, and even roofs of houses were crowded with spectators; the acclamations were universal, and it was easy to see that these unbought shouts came from the heart, and were produced only by gratitude for their deliverance. It was impossible to mistake the sincere and heartfelt emotion by which they were produced. It is but seldom that the fate of kings is to be envied, yet I confess that the sensations of the Emperor of Austria on entering this town, after all that has happened since his coronation here, twenty-one years ago, are such as one would give a good deal to enjoy.

The headquarters of the allied sovereigns remained for more than a month at Frankfort. Lord Aberdeen had feared that it might become 'a Capua;' but this was not the case. It was, however, a stage, on which kings, generals and statesmen were even more crowded than at Teplitz. Lord Aberdeen was not a little disappointed by the essentially commonplace character and moderate abilities of the leading actors, both civil and military, in the great drama in which he was called on to take part. 'I have seen all the great men whose names at a distance are imposing,' he had already written to Lady Maria from Teplitz, 'but I think little of most of them. Old Platoff is a striking figure, but quite a barbarian; Barclay de Tolly the dullest dog you can imagine; Bennigsen sensible, but near eighty years of age. I rather like the Grand Duke Constantine. He is the image of Paul, and very mad, but

very entertaining, and in a way clever. But the Prince Royal of Prussia is the prince of the greatest promise. He is very like his mother, and shows great spirit.' Nesselrode he describes as a man of but moderate abilities, and selected by the Emperor Alexander as his minister for that very reason; 'the moment he is suspected of possessing talents superior to those of his master will be the last of his power.' The naïve and excessive vanity of Metternich, and the narrowness of many of his views, inclined Lord Aberdeen in the first instance to take a lower view of his abilities than he did at a later period of the campaign, but while doing full justice to his extreme dexterity and instinctive perception of what was in any given circumstances possible, he persisted in considering that his reputation far exceeded his true intellectual rank. It is curious, as showing how complete had been the cessation of intercourse with the Continent, to find Lord Aberdeen gravely correcting the impression of the English Foreign Secretary that Metternich was at that time a very old man!

It is easy to comprehend the species of intoxication which must have attended the vast successes of the allies. After so many years of unchecked ascendency on the part of Napoleon, the mere spectacle of his flight from German soil must have caused a singularly novel as well as satisfactory sensation to all good Germans; but the news which poured in from all quarters in succession, the accession of Bavaria to the alliance, followed by that of Wurtemberg, the dissolution of the Confederation of the Rhine, the expulsion of the French from Spain, the defection of Murat, the revolt of Holland, the submission of Denmark, were sufficient to turn the strongest head, and that in many cases they did so is sufficiently apparent from the correspondence which has been preserved. They did not, how-

ever, turn that of the young ambassador, who still held that, on all grounds, peace should be made as soon as it could be made with security. That security, he believed, would be afforded by stripping from Napoleon all the possessions and influence which he had acquired beyond the natural limits of France; nor did he think that those limits could be infringed or diminished without the strongest probability of exciting on the part of the French nation an universal patriotic resistance, the strength of which had been underrated twenty years before, and might easily be underrated again. Lord Cathcart and Sir Charles Stewart held other opinions, in which they were warmly supported by the rank and file of the regular diplomatic service; whose jealousy of the 'amateur ambassador,' who had never before held any diplomatic post, was not diminished by the extraordinary favour and confidence with which Lord Aberdeen was distinguished, not only by the sovereign to whom he was accredited, but by those also with whom Lord Cathcart and Sir Charles Stewart were in ostensibly closer relation. It was not with Lord Cathcart, but with Lord Aberdeen, that Count Nesselrode conferred on the subject of the general alliance, the arrangements with Denmark, the future operations of the allies, and the propositions to Napoleon, of which, as well as of the proposals to Denmark, Lord Aberdeen alone of the English ministers was cognisant, and which were only communicated to Lord Cathcart at a later period, and by Lord Aberdeen's express wish.

It has already been mentioned that during the course of the battle of Leipsic General Count Merfeldt was taken prisoner, and sent back to the Austrian army, on parole, by Napoleon. He brought from the French Emperor offers for the surrender of the Elbe fortresses, and overtures for peace, accompanied by an expression of Napoleon's willing-

ness to make sacrifices which Merfeldt plainly told him the allies would certainly require. The offer of the fortresses was rejected with no other reply than that involved in the renewal of the battle; but to the intimation that Napoleon was willing to treat for peace, it was requisite to give some answer; and it was decided between Metternich, Nesselrode, and Aberdeen, that the Count de St. Aignan, the French Resident at Gotha and Weimar, who had been taken prisoner at Leipsic, should be charged with the response to the overture. His release, both as a non-military man and a diplomatic agent, was in any case inevitable, and his natural departure from the allied lines for France was consequently unlikely to excite any curiosity or suspicion. In this transaction Lord Aberdeen again gave proof of that calm soberness of judgment and moderation which so eminently distinguished him. He reports, that at a long conference between Metternich, Nesselrode, and himself on November 8, 'Count Nesselrode wished to state the terms of the allies in the first instance as high as possible, and reduce them afterwards in the course of negotiation.' Lord Aberdeen was of opinion that it 'would be the preferable course to state the terms as low as possible, and firmly to adhere to them. I told him,' he wrote, 'that if the propositions were made with the hope of being accepted, common sense dictated that they should be rendered as palatable to Bonaparte as was consistent with the fixed views of the allies. If the proposition were made without any such hope, I deprecated the whole proceeding, as being most erroneous in principle, and calculated to produce the greatest injury to the common cause. In this reasoning Prince Metternich concurred.'[1] The following evening Metternich, Nesselrode,

[1] Count Metternich had been created a Prince immediately after the battle of Leipsic.

and Aberdeen saw St. Aignan immediately before his departure. A conversation ensued, in which the essential bases of negotiation were stated to be the adoption by Bonaparte of the natural limits of France, meaning generally thereby the Alps, the Rhine, and the Pyrenees: 'the absolute independence of Germany, and the renunciation of every species of constitutional influence in that country on the part of France; not meaning thereby the natural and indispensable influence which every powerful state must exercise over its weaker neighbours:' and the absolute independence of Spain, Italy, and Holland. On the other hand Lord Aberdeen told M. de St. Aignan that England was ready to make great sacrifices in order to obtain peace for Europe; that she did not interfere with the freedom of commerce, or with those maritime rights to which France could with justice pretend, and had no wish to interfere with the reasonable pretensions of France. . . . 'My great object, if any propositions were made, was so to frame them as to afford the greatest probability of success consistent with the fixed policy of the allies. . . . My next object was that the whole transaction should be conducted with the utmost secrecy and expedition. . . .'

When Lord Cathcart and Sir Charles Stewart became aware of what had passed, the former was startled, and inclined to insist on the prosecution of the war without any negotiation; but he was on the spot, and Lord Aberdeen was able to induce him to adopt views similar to his own, nor from that time forward did he encounter any difficulties on the part of Lord Cathcart. Sir Charles Stewart was unfortunately at Hanover with the Crown Prince of Sweden, and consequently out of the reach of Lord Aberdeen's personal influence; while he was worked on by those about him who disliked Lord Aberdeen, and despised him as an

amateur. These persons persuaded Sir Charles Stewart that Lord Aberdeen had abandoned the interests of England and of Europe, and that France had no 'maritime rights' to which she could with justice pretend, and no 'pretensions' which could be considered reasonable. In his despatches on that subject Sir Charles Stewart insisted that Lord Aberdeen had omitted from the propositions, which Napoleon was to be called on to accept, several objects of the highest interest to Great Britain. But Castlereagh and the British Cabinet shared Lord Aberdeen's views, adopted his reasoning, and approved his action. Sir Charles Stewart was somewhat curtly told that he had omitted to perceive the essential difference between a *basis* of negotiation and the terms of a definitive treaty, and Lord Aberdeen was assured of 'H.R.H. the Prince Regent's full approval of the part he had borne in these delicate and momentous discussions,' and of the willingness of the British Government to treat on the bases proposed, including therein the frontier of 'the Rhine, with such departure therefrom as may sufficiently provide for the independence and security of Holland,' which country had in the interval successfully freed itself from French control.

But the commencement of negotiations for peace was not the only matter which attracted Lord Aberdeen's attention during his stay at Frankfort. The liberation of Holland and of Switzerland, the detachment of Denmark from the French cause, the position of Murat, and the negotiation of the general treaty of alliance equally occupied his thoughts.

The liberation of Holland, from which the French were expelled almost without fighting, was effected with little difficulty; but in the Low Countries the rising was more partial, and an attempt to seize Antwerp failed. As to Switzerland Lord Aberdeen wrote, that the Avoyer of Berne had sent secretly to consult him, and that he had vigorously sup-

ported the plan of effecting a revolution in Switzerland and the restoration of the old cantonal government concurrently with the entrance of Switzerland by the allied armies on their road to France.

That Denmark was added to the allies was entirely due to the firmness of Lord Aberdeen. Prussia already cast an eye on the provinces which it annexed half a century later, and on Swedish Pomerania, which it could only hope to receive if Sweden acquired fresh territory elsewhere. Russia, for reasons of its own, desired such an aggrandisement of Sweden at the expense of Denmark as would excuse its own extension westwards. The English Government was bent on satisfying its guarantee to Bernadotte, and was on the whole impatient of discussions which seemed to retard, if not imperil, its fulfilment and his co-operation. Lord Aberdeen was, however, far from sharing the sentiments of his Government on this point. Although he might not be able very materially to soften the hard conditions to be imposed on Denmark, he was at all events determined to avert, if he could, her threatened extinction as an independent state, and afford her an opportunity of recovering her position by entering the alliance, should she make up her mind to do so on the only conditions now attainable.

It was with great surprise that Lord Aberdeen learnt on his arrival at Teplitz, that Murat was actually in Dresden and in command of Napoleon's cavalry. He had been lured there by Napoleon on the pretence that peace was upon the point of conclusion. On his arrival he was placed under arrest until he consented to comply with Napoleon's wishes. He nevertheless contrived to keep up intercourse with Metternich and Lord Aberdeen, and on the first opportunity after the defeats of Leipsic he quitted Napoleon and fled, with the utmost expedition, to Italy, whence he

issued orders for the recall of the Neapolitan troops then serving with the French army. Finally, an armistice between the Austrian and Neapolitan forces was followed by one between Murat and the British army in Sicily, signed on behalf of England by Mr. J. G. R. Graham, whose long and clear letter giving an account of the transaction, and excusing his own boldness in taking upon himself, though 'a very young man,' to sign an arrangement not exactly authorised by his instructions, was the first communication ever received by Lord Aberdeen from the most intimate correspondent of his later life, Sir James Graham of Netherby.

But the greatest and most successful service rendered by Lord Aberdeen during the month spent by the allied sovereigns at Frankfort and the subsequent month passed on the banks of the Rhine was the prevention of any outbreak of the mutual jealousies which were ever ready to blaze forth, and were only suppressed by his exercise of tact and resolute retention of a commanding position as the representative of England. But this was a service which, though of infinite importance, was not one to attract the public eye, or to be loudly celebrated by colleagues whom it cast into the shade. It was, however, fully recognised by Lord Castlereagh and Lord Liverpool, and has equally been so by those who have made the diplomatic transactions of the campaign a matter of serious study. 'It is probable,' writes the accomplished author of a series of articles which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* for 1858-59,

that after the Duke of Wellington no British statesman or soldier so largely influenced the successful issue of the great struggle for the freedom of Europe in 1813 [as Lord Aberdeen]. It may be doubted whether, but for the firmness, the tact, the temper, and the sagacity which form the character of Lord Aberdeen, the influence of England would have overcome the

rival interests which first obstructed the combination of the European powers and next threatened the dissolution of their confederacy.

This is the language of a man of great knowledge, and the calmest judicial temperament,[1] who was bound to Lord Aberdeen by no tie of political connection or personal attachment; and it will probably command the acquiescence of the few who possess an accurate knowledge of the secret history of the time.

Lord Aberdeen's difficulties were materially increased by the marked difference shown by his Government in its attitude towards Russia and Austria. On December 4 he wrote to Castlereagh:

The outrageous compliment you pay [in the Prince Regent's speech] to the Emperor of Russia does not suit the taste of the successor of the Cæsars; and when you put *Austria* and *Bavaria* in the same paragraph, you cannot be surprised that the proudest Court in Europe should take offence. Really these sallies undo all that I am labouring to accomplish; God knows there are heart burnings enough to allay, and the task is not easy. I do my best, but I tell you plainly a few more instances of such odious preference will go far to loosen the very foundations of the coalition.

Besides the great political questions which occupied his attention, there were others of a more personal character in which Lord Aberdeen took a lively interest.

Among the brilliant assembly which Lord Aberdeen had found collected at Teplitz there was an English officer, Sir Robert Wilson, previously unknown to Lord Aberdeen except by reputation. With him Lord Aberdeen speedily contracted relations of close intimacy. Sir Robert Wilson had accompanied the Russian armies as English military representative during the whole of the campaign of 1812–13; and he was now temporarily attached in a somewhat similar capacity to the army of Prince Schwartzenberg.

[1] The late Sir George Cornewall Lewis.

The absence of Tory prejudices on Lord Aberdeen's part astonished him, and whilst at Frankfort he wrote in his diary: 'By principles Aberdeen belongs to *us*. He is a Liberal politician, and a man of high independent spirit, with a very reasoning mind, in which there is no inextirpable prejudice. I should have thought Lord Grey and he would have been inseparables; and they would have been, if accident had favoured nature and brought them more in communication.'[1] The testimony of so strong a Liberal as Sir Robert Wilson to the breadth of Lord Aberdeen's views is remarkable, though it was no doubt accentuated by gratitude. Wilson had been temporarily attached to Schwartzenberg's headquarters, the moment the Austrian army had joined the allies. His previous service with the Russian army and intimacy with the Emperor Alexander and with Blücher made him specially useful as a medium of communication between all the divisions of the allied force, and gave him an influence and position which no man, however able, coming newly to the scene could hope for a long period to possess. But the officer whom the English Government had now sent out to act as military attaché with the Austrian army was not an able man; whilst of course he was totally unacquainted with those with whom he would be placed in relation. He was the eldest son of Lord Westmorland, Lord Burghersh, then a young soldier without distinction. He was known afterwards as a fair amateur musician, who once wrote an opera and composed a Mass; who for a long period represented England with credit at the Courts of Tuscany and Naples; and who afterwards became British minister at Berlin and ambassador at Vienna.

Lord Aberdeen knew and liked Burghersh, but at once

[1] Sir Robert Wilson's Private Journal, 1813–14, vol. ii. p. 238.

saw that not only was he not the man to replace Wilson, but that the substitution of the one for the other had in it something which bordered on the ludicrous. He therefore strongly urged Castlereagh to leave Sir Robert Wilson where he was, and to send Lord Burghersh with the army of Marshal Bellegarde to Italy. This was pressed by him in the strongest language.

Schwartzenberg and Metternich have frequently spoken to me on the subject. The first has written to me in the most pressing manner; the latter has told me that he had it in command from the Emperor to express his sense of the great services of Wilson, and to state his wishes that he should continue with the army. Schwartzenberg told me he would as soon part with Radetzky, the Quartermaster-General; that Wilson was admitted to all their councils, and that they had the most entire confidence in his zeal and talents. His services in the field have been most conspicuous. In short, to enumerate his military services would be endless. But great as they are, they fall short in Schwartzenberg's estimation of those which he has rendered out of the field. From his intimate knowledge of the Russian and Prussian armies, and the great respect invariably shown him by the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia, he is able to do a thousand things which no one else could. He was the means of making up a difference between the King and Schwartzenberg, which was of the utmost importance. In short, I cannot possibly be deceived; I hear it from morning till night from all nations; and I am perfectly persuaded there is no man in existence who unites in the fourth part of the degree the love and admiration of the three armies.

And again, somewhat later:

I do not know how to express the sensation which the intelligence of Wilson's removal has produced in all ranks of all armies. The Emperor of Russia has flatly declared that he will take on himself the responsibility of making him stay, and that he will write to the Prince accordingly. The King has been equally kind, and old Blücher has pressed him to come and share his quarters for the rest of the campaign, where he shall be treated as his son. But in the Austrian army, from the first to the last, the feeling is the same, and as strongly expressed. I assure you that Schwartzenberg more than once, in speaking of it, has absolutely *cried* with vexation—a pretty good proof that he was in earnest. He says that in the

disagreeable sort of command which he has over Russians and Prussians there are many things which, if it were not for Wilson, he should not venture to propose. In the field it has frequently happened that he has sent Wilson to *persuade* Russian officers, nay, even the Emperor himself, to do what he would not otherwise have thought of. Schwartzenberg told me that he had stated this in pretty plain terms to Burghersh, in the hope that he would have chosen to go to Italy. The Emperor of Austria has taken it up as strongly; he has spoken to Metternich about it, and directed him to take some steps on the subject. Now you may think all this intrigue, but how is it possible? Would everybody that is highest and most respectable join in a matter of this kind if they had it not really at heart? Besides the Emperor and Metternich, every Austrian at all distinguished has come to me with the same language. Merfeldt, Liechtenstein, Colloredo, Fresnel, Radetzky, all agree; and this feeling is not confined to military men. I believe that I have given tolerable satisfaction here to both Austrians and Russians, and may, perhaps, be of some use by not being thought ill of by either; but it is the deliberate conviction of my mind that neither I nor any minister whatever could be of half the use to the general cause that Wilson has been. I am not blind to his faults—he may be too meddling; his political opinions may have been violent, and of course an ill-directed zeal may lead him into error: but what, after all, is the result? Never man was more loved and admired than he has been, and it is at a moment like the present that one finds it out in its full extent. With regard to myself, it is quite impossible that I should have any object in this affair. I never knew Wilson before coming here. I declare before God with the most deep-rooted conviction that the good of the service absolutely demands my interference in this case. And I tell you with the same frankness which I hope always to use towards you, that if you persevere in this arrangement you are guilty of an act more injurious to the general good than anything else of a personal nature which I can possibly conceive could be. If you value the wishes of every person to whom you ought to attend here, if you value the good of the service, if you wish to possess a tie by which Austrians, Russians, and Prussians may be united, and mutual asperities smoothed, you will keep Wilson here.

But he wrote in vain. Sir Robert Wilson's Liberal politics were fatal to him, and Castlereagh replied, with something like a sneer, that Sir Robert Wilson might enjoy the confidence of other European Governments, but did not possess that of his own; that, however, as Lord Aberdeen

wished him to continue with the Austrian armies, he might be allowed to do so; but only at the headquarters of Marshal Bellegarde in Italy. I have thought this incident worthy of narration at some length, because it is highly illustrative both of Lord Aberdeen's character, and of the way in which such matters were regarded in official circles in the early years of this century. To Lord Aberdeen it seemed only natural and right that the officer of experience and influence should remain at the post where that knowledge and influence were most usefully exercised, and that the newcomer should go to Italy; but to his diplomatic colleagues, and especially to the smaller fry of officials, like Sir George Jackson, it appeared not only amazing, but positively scandalous, that such considerations should induce him to prefer a man of Whig opinions to a supporter of the Government; a man previously unknown to him to one with whom he was familiar;[1] and a soldier without birth or connection to the son of a Cabinet minister.

Lord Aberdeen has left on record a strong opinion with regard to the capitulation of Dresden, which, though not that of the majority of his contemporaries, the verdict of posterity has ratified.

The attempt to restore things to their former condition is so essentially absurd—and the enemy will so well know how to turn it to account—that I am sure it would have been better to fulfil the conditions, however unauthorised. Being on that footing of intimacy with Schwartzenberg which enabled me to venture to do so, I spoke to him on the subject. He received my observations with the utmost kindness, but said it was now at all events too late to do anything, and that he had considered the matter coolly, and was convinced he was justified in equity and military law in not ratifying the act. Of course I did not press the matter further. In the evening I saw the Emperor. He talked with me a long while on the subject. He said that he himself entirely agreed with me in the view that I had taken,

[1] 'The droll thing is that Lord Aberdeen, to whom Wilson was unknown till he met him here, supports him."—*Bath Archives*, Sir G. Jackson, vol. ii. p. 347.

and had spoken to Metternich accordingly. He said that they had persuaded him to agree to the course that had been adopted, but that it was against his judgment. He said a hundred things about the interest which I had taken in his honour, and altogether spoke in so cordial a manner that I cannot do justice to the satisfaction he exhibited.

While desirous of peace, and inclined to believe that it might be brought about with safety, and without the sacrifice of any essentially English interest, Lord Aberdeen never ceased to urge meanwhile the most vigorous prosecution of the war. He strongly advocated and assisted in deciding the advance of the armies into France itself, a measure apparently almost as distasteful to the other English diplomatists on the spot, as the intimation of a readiness to negotiate had been. The English Government was reluctant to surrender its apprehension that Metternich was inclined to favour France, and that slowness and indecision would be shown by the Austrian Government in raising forces for the contest. Views of this nature were expressed in a letter from Castlereagh, and Lord Aberdeen's answer was highly characteristic :

Do not think Metternich such a formidable personage; depend upon it I have most substantial reasons for knowing that he is heart and soul with us; but, my dear Castlereagh, with all your wisdom, judgment, and experience, which are as great as possible, and which I respect sincerely, I think you have so much of the Englishman about you as not quite to be aware of the real value of foreign modes of acting. *Put yourself in Metternich's place.* He had an Austrian game as well as a European one to play, *and to play which was his first duty.* To enter into the war with most insufficient means—to deliver himself, even if successful, into the hands of Russia and Prussia—could not be wise in the minister of this weakened but still mighty empire. He has come forward as the head of the German body should appear—the leading power; the effect has been decisive. Now do not be afraid of me. There is a sort of half confidence and intimacy which ambassadors may enjoy which perhaps is likely to mislead. My intercourse with Metternich is of another description. Living with him at all times and in all situations, is it possible

that I should not know him? He is singularly acute but withal not a very clever man. He is very vain, but he is a good Austrian. He is at this moment the main support of warlike measures.

Lord Aberdeen, who considered that he had fulfilled his mission by firmly establishing the Austrian alliance, contemplated returning home from Frankfort. He wrote to Castlereagh:

I write as if I looked forward to eternity, but it is only the peculiarity of my situation which renders it tolerable—and that does not bring me my children. You know my bargain? When I look back on what I have done, I feel perfectly confident that I have laid a foundation of friendship and cordiality which may be easily preserved and turned to the best account. If we are to have negotiation and you chuse me to stay, I will do my best, and with the utmost pleasure; but if the war continues I think of home. Parliament has met, and although I am not a regular performer, that is the scene after all. To assist you I would do this, or almost anything else, but I lean towards home.

On the receipt of Napoleon's acceptance of the bases of negotiation sent from Frankfort, Count Pozzo di Borgo was despatched to England with the news, and furnished with the views of the three allied powers respecting them. He was also the bearer of their request that Lord Aberdeen might be appointed the English negotiator, as equally acceptable to all the three Governments, and fully acquainted with the feelings of each. Lord Aberdeen had intended to accompany Pozzo to England, but forbore doing so, partly because he did not wish to have the appearance of pressing his own claims, and partly because his presence at headquarters could ill be spared. He wrote to Lady Maria on October 22:

I have met with quite enough to turn a stouter brain; do not think me too arrogant, but I really assure you that you can scarcely imagine the position in which I stand. Events of importance unparalleled are passing through my nands. Enjoying the confidence of the Austrian Government, the first member

of this great confederation, and consulted by the minister without reserve, and with almost as little reserve by the minister of Russia, you may have some notion of the objects of my attention. Yet would I leave them all with pleasure were I sure I could do it also with dignity. When I see the picture of the dear children everything sinks in importance.

On the arrival in London of Pozzo di Borgo, the English Cabinet, after a careful consideration of the various communications of which he was the bearer, decided that Lord Castlereagh himself should proceed to the Continent, and confer on the spot with the allied sovereigns and their ministers.

Meanwhile the allied armies moved forward to the French frontier.

Lord Aberdeen's almost daily letters to Lady Maria Hamilton form a sort of journal of this advance, and are in many ways full of interest. The following extract will convey an idea of their character :

I like the Germans better on better acquaintance. They are a good people. The Emperor is as good a man as any in his dominions, in all the essentials of goodness : a good husband and father, a man of truth and honour, and as a sovereign benignant and just. But it is not among the conspicuous persons of the Court that I should wish to judge. In the sort of life I have led it has been my chance to be the guest of all ranks, from the highest to the lowest, one night sleeping in a palace, another in a cottage. I have been generally a forced guest, it is true, and might therefore have found the worst side apparent. I have, on the contrary, always been struck by the goodness, the *bonhomie*, the honesty of all ranks. Madame de Staël describes them well ; poetically, but well. I have not yet had time to finish her second volume ; but I certainly agree with you as to what she says of their literature, so far as I understand it, for it is a little rash to pronounce at once without a more thorough knowledge of their language. It is clear that Madame de Staël does not enter fully into the spirit of English composition, nor can she understand it. But is not this the case with all nations ? There is a degree of intimate knowledge which a stranger can never attain to. Besides which, there is a national feeling, a sort of attachment, which you may call prejudice if you will, but which even in this case is perhaps a virtue, by which we are rendered partial judges. It is like a

face which is dear to us; when we know and love the mind we cannot bear the frigid criticisms of a stranger on the features in which it is exhibited. I by no means deny the justice of her general remarks on English literature; but to tell you the truth, I take the liberty of receiving all criticisms of this sort with great indifference. To feel strongly, to enjoy fully, what appear to me beauties is the first point; to make others feel and enjoy them too augments the pleasure twofold, provided they are persons whose sensations are worthy of exciting interest. But I must have done for to-night; all this I could have told you just as well at home. *Freyburg*, 18th December.—At Offenburg we came to the edge of the Black Forest; we have skirted it all to-day. This town is situated at the entrance of a gorge leading into the forest, and is backed by fine hills covered with wood. I have long wished to see the Black Forest. I have always heard much of its picturesque beauty; and you know it is the native country of the banditti, assassins, and all heroes of that sort who figure in romances. I am glad to see that there is a fair proportion of fine oak and beechwood, and that it is not only the eternal Scotch or spruce fir. The forms seem to be fine, the hills rocky, and plenty of torrents, so I shall have employment for some days. I hope I do not tire you by writing of nothing but the appearance of the country and beautiful scenery. We are old fellow-travellers, and you know there is nothing which at all times has so benignant an influence over me as the enjoyment of nature. It is so pure and unmixed, it is so perfectly within our power at all times and in all places, and it is so intense, that I think those persons who do not possess it are much to be pitied. They have a sense the less. . . .

During the three weeks spent by Lord Aberdeen at Freiburg and in its vicinity, he found ample exercise for all his powers in appeasing the dissensions of the allies, which, though constantly made up, broke out from time to time to a most alarming degree. On one occasion the Emperor Alexander gave orders to suspend the onward progress of his forces, and threatened to withdraw them altogether from the scene of action. Whilst at Frankfort it had been agreed by the allied sovereigns, and the Emperor Alexander among them, that the allied forces should enter France through Switzerland, the neutrality of which, they held, could not in existing circumstances claim to be respected.

But Alexander subsequently changed his mind, and announced that he should consider the entrance of the Austrian forces into Switzerland as a declaration of war against himself. Prince Metternich was determined not to permit the advance of the allies to be thus interrupted, but spared no pains to disarm the Russian opposition, and by wonderfully skilful management succeeded in so doing. A revolution was easily effected in Switzerland, the old cantonal governments being restored in most cases by the very officers who presided over the state as constituted by Napoleon. The Austrians were then invited by the new Government to pass through Switzerland, and the invitation was accepted.

The Emperor Alexander was compelled to admit that it was necessary to take advantage of the favourable disposition of the Swiss people, but still adhered to his former opinions as to the principle of the measure. Prince Metternich, as Lord Aberdeen wrote, 'wisely did not dispute the principle laid down, being content to have secured the Emperor's conformity of conduct.' Lord Aberdeen, who had seen the Swiss agents at Frankfort, and had given pecuniary assistance to effect the revolution, warmly seconded him; and Sir Robert Wilson, who had not yet gone to Italy, had a last opportunity of displaying the extent and value of his influence among the officers of the Russian army. Before he left the Austrian headquarters Sir Robert received from the Emperor Francis the coveted and rare gift of the Commander's Cross of Maria Theresa, one of the highest of military distinctions, and one which by the laws of the Order can only be bestowed for services of the most brilliant description. The Emperor at the same time conferred on Lord Aberdeen the great Hungarian order of St. Stephen, never given to any other Englishman, and rarely to any foreigner unless of royal rank.

Lord Aberdeen, notwithstanding the settlement of the quarrel as to Switzerland, continued to regard the relations of the allies with the utmost alarm, and the tension was such that he wrote on the 19th December: 'Notwithstanding our brilliant successes, every day convinces me more and more that if we can contrive to negotiate a tolerable peace at this moment we shall adopt the only means of securing our advantages.' It was at Freiburg that Lord Aberdeen received intelligence from Castlereagh of his intention to repair to the Continent. The intimation, on the whole, gave him pleasure, although he felt uncertain as to the effect which Castlereagh's presence on the scene might have. To Lord Abercorn he wrote:

I am not certain if the arrival of Castlereagh will do good. It may, if he acts wisely; but if he comes with all the partialities and prejudices long cherished in England, his presence will be most pernicious. Personally, I am much satisfied, for I wish for nothing more than that he should judge on the spot of the effect of all my intercourse with the Austrian Government, and the other powers.

Lord Castlereagh arrived at Basle on the 19th January. He was at first somewhat inclined to conduct the negotiations for peace himself, but assured Lord Aberdeen that should he not do so he would certainly confide their conduct to him, by whom they had been really commenced at Frankfort. Castlereagh did not come to any decision for ten days, and during that time Lord Aberdeen, rather against his will, felt bound to remain with him.

Castlereagh has not made up his mind how the negotiation shall be conducted (he wrote to Lord Abercorn), and I am bound to wait for his decision. I think it most probable that he will manage it all himself, in which case I think he will scarcely have treated me fairly in not coming to a decision sooner, because my departure at this moment cannot but be misunderstood. Whatever be the result, my presence at this moment is very useful to Castlereagh, and I am sure he feels it, which makes a short delay tolerable.

Of the advance into France Lord Aberdeen wrote from Vesoul on the 24th January :

This being the third day of my journey in France, if I write to you everywhere else, you may well expect to hear from me now. Even a letter which contains nothing must be received with satisfaction when written at the present moment a hundred miles within the French territory. . . . The universal cry is for peace ; they all abuse Napoleon as the author of their sufferings, but do not appear to have any desire to change the dynasty. I have only heard *one* man speak in favour of the Bourbons ; yet I doubt not, if they thought that the return of the Royal Family was an indispensable condition of peace, they would be too happy to agree to it. The conscription is the dreadful engine by which they are oppressed ; no family is without cause of lamentation. It is not only the extensive destruction which ensues of those who march, but numbers are torn from their homes under circumstances in which to survive is almost worse than death. In other respects they have not much to complain of. The taxes are not immoderate ; the cottages appear to be good, and the people not ill-clad. The country through which we have passed is extremely beautiful ; diversified with hills, valleys, and fine woods of oak and beech. It is well cultivated, and the high roads are most magnificent. The people are very civil and well-disposed, and do not suffer more than is inseparable from the passage of so large an army composed of such different materials. Schwartzenberg does his best to observe the strictest discipline, but nothing can prevent the excesses of the Cossacks and Russians. It is a little difficult to find the means of conveyance when such a multitude of horses is required for the service of the army. All the horses of the country are put in requisition, and the peasants are happy if they ever see these animals again when once they are taken. We have surprised them very much by paying for them. In Germany it is the custom for one man to ride and drive four horses, or even six ; here I have had four horses brought from different ploughs and each required to be ridden, so that with my four postilions, in the most grotesque and various dresses imaginable, I have exhibited a singular *attelage*. In all this confusion and distress the people do not lose their gaiety. Poor fellows who have been plundered of everything in the world, and beaten for not possessing more, intersperse their narratives with jokes. They all do full justice to the position of our nation, and give us even more credit than we deserve with respect to this great confederacy. I was a little shocked, however, last night, to find that my host, a decent man, the notary-public of the town, had never heard the name of Lord Wellington.

On January 29 Lord Castlereagh arrived at the decision that, as neither Prince Metternich nor Count Nesselrode proposed to act as negotiators themselves, neither would he. His first intention was to employ Lord Aberdeen alone as the British plenipotentiary. But when this became known to Lord Cathcart and Sir Charles Stewart, as well as the fact that Lord Aberdeen attended meetings of the ministers of the four Powers, from which they were excluded, their discontent was so violent, and seemed likely to have such prejudicial consequences, that Castlereagh was induced to hesitate, and begged Lord Aberdeen, while himself remaining 'the sole efficient person, to make all reports, to be the sole mouthpiece and generally the negotiator,' to consent that Lord Cathcart and Sir Charles Stewart should act along with him as assistants in 'a sort of Cabinet.' Castlereagh told Lord Aberdeen that although one of the disappointed negotiators was his own brother, he should have thought nothing of their dissatisfaction had it not been for the opportunity of serious mischief which might be given by the insinuation, that the appointment of the ambassador to Austria as the sole English plenipotentiary showed a disposition to disregard the interests of Russia and Prussia, and begged Lord Aberdeen, in language of the most earnest entreaty, to agree to an arrangement which he felt he could not require, and could hardly expect him to accept.

For his compliance with Lord Castlereagh's wishes Lord Aberdeen was severely taken to task by many of his friends. Lord Abercorn especially wrote to censure his sacrificing himself by 'playing into Lord Castlereagh's and his brother's hands. All praise will be arrogated by Lord Cathcart and his extensive connections, and blame and unpopularity you will studiously be made to share.' But it is clear that the principles on which he invariably acted left Lord Aberdeen

really no option, and that a refusal by him of the chief conduct of the negotiation could only have been based on personal considerations, which would not on public grounds have afforded any justification of his action.

The negotiators arrived at Châtillon on February 3 ; and on the 5th held their first conference with the Duke of Vicenza. It was chiefly occupied by matters of form, but Caulaincourt showed an unexpected readiness to meet the wishes of the allies.

The result (wrote Lord Aberdeen to Castlereagh) I believe none of us anticipated, although I think it necessary to wait for our next meeting before we can attempt satisfactorily to explain the cause of the wonderful facility evinced by the French plenipotentiary. Different motives may be easily assigned for his conduct : Napoleon may be so much reduced in his means of resistance as to make him desirous of concluding a negotiation on any terms which would leave him on the throne of France. Or he may make these preliminary concessions in order to place himself in a favourable light with the people, and thereby endeavour to excite a spirit of enthusiasm with the view of ultimately resisting the more important demands of the allies. At the same time it is impossible to deny that the French negotiator has hitherto only made those concessions which would be agreed to by any wise man desirous of concluding a peace on those moderate and equitable terms which are best calculated to ensure its duration.

On the 7th a second conference was held, at which it became apparent that the French plenipotentiary was ready to acquiesce substantially in the demands of the allies, and Lord Aberdeen wrote to Castlereagh that he thought it was 'now evident that the French Government entertains a sincere and earnest desire of peace.

Had Napoleon accepted, in the first instance, the propositions brought to him by M. de St. Aignan, the allies were pledged to leave to France the frontier of the Rhine. While he hesitated, the revolt of Holland took place, which materially altered the situation ; but even when he did accept he might have secured a frontier considerably to the north

of that of Royal France, had the negotiation commenced immediately. Castlereagh's intimation that he intended to take a personal part in the discussion, however, necessarily caused some delay, and when the conferences at Châtillon actually opened, the armies of the allies had advanced far into France, while the Low Countries, as well as Holland, were in full revolt. As a result of the successes obtained and the actual position of affairs, the allied demands now comprised the reduction of France to the limits of the monarchy of 1792, instead of leaving the Rhine as the frontier.

Caulaincourt at the conference on the 7th applied for an armistice, but was told that the signature of preliminaries of peace would answer the same purpose, and prove a more effectual step. There can be little doubt that at the next conference the terms of the preliminary treaty would have been adjusted, possibly the treaty itself signed. That the British Government was fully prepared for such a step is shown by the following laconic note from Castlereagh to Lord Aberdeen, written in answer to an inquiry as to the manner in which the pacific dispositions of Caulaincourt were to be met: 'My dear Aberdeen, we must sign. Certainly we must sign. We shall be stoned when we get back to England, but we must sign.—Yours ever, C.' Nor do either the protocols of the conference, or Lord Aberdeen's public reports or private letters, show any trace of the indignation or inflexibility attributed by M. Thiers to Caulaincourt.[1] On the contrary, it is clear that to have obtained an armistice he would have assented to the allies' terms, and (possessing, as he at that time did, full powers to do so) would probably have signed preliminaries of peace to ensure it. But on February 9th the unexpected action of the Emperor Alexander suspended that of the con-

[1] *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire*, tom. xvii. pp. 292–296.

ference. On the morning of that day the Russian plenipotentiary received orders to proceed no further until fresh instructions had reached him. Lord Aberdeen was highly indignant at a proceeding which was in fact inconsistent with good faith. The Emperor Alexander's head had been turned by the victory (though a hardly bought one) of La Rothière, and he desired to treat no longer with Napoleon, but to press on to Paris, and there leave, at least in name, the choice of a French sovereign to an elective assembly. But behind this proposal lurked what Lord Aberdeen styled a 'dark intrigue' of Russian aggrandisement. It was to be arranged that this nominally free, but virtually packed, assembly should elect Bernadotte king of France; and that, in gratitude for so great a service, the Prince Royal of Sweden, before surrendering his connection with that country, should make over to Russia the ever open haven of Varanger Fiord.[1] But this scheme received a double check. When the possibility of Bernadotte's election was hinted at to the Emperor Francis, he at once declared that he would not suffer any such scheme to take effect. He was, he said, quite prepared to assist in dethroning his daughter's husband, if the welfare of Europe rendered such a step essential, and if it were apparent that peace on fit terms could not be otherwise secured; but he was not prepared to do so for the benefit of a French adventurer. If Napoleon were indeed to be deposed, he would treat with no sovereign of France save Louis XVIII. An even more fatal blow to such pretensions was given by Napoleon himself, who, in the ten days which succeeded La Rothière, gained a series of brilliant victories, which necessitated a retreat of the allied forces, and which seemed to render their expulsion from France more

[1] In the newly acquired part of Norway.

probable than their advance to Paris—a state of things which changed the over-sanguine anticipations of the Emperor Alexander into equally exaggerated alarm and despondency, whilst at the same time it restored all Napoleon's overweening confidence in his own good fortune.

When, therefore, the conferences were by mutual agreement resumed on February 17, the plenipotentiaries naturally found Caulaincourt in a different frame of mind from that in which they left him, and far less ready to accept the terms of the allies than had been the case a week before. They found him also in a very different position, though that, indeed, they could not know. At the earlier meetings of the conference he was in possession of full powers to sign any engagement which he felt to be essential. These powers, originally granted with reluctance and wrung from Napoleon with the utmost difficulty, had now been recalled, and Caulaincourt had been instructed to sign nothing without previous reference to the French Emperor.

Notwithstanding the recent reverses of the allies, it had been wisely determined that there should be no diminution in their demands, and on the renewal of the conference the sketch of a preliminary treaty was submitted to the French plenipotentiary for his consideration. The main conditions of this draft were the renunciation by France of all acquisitions of territory made since 1792, and the abandonment by the Emperor of all direct or indirect constitutional influence possessed by him beyond the limits of France as King of Italy, Protector of the Confederation of the Rhine, and Mediator of Switzerland. Some of the minor terms were harsh, but would no doubt have been modified had these essential points been conceded. These concessions Caulaincourt pressed his master to make, while at the same time he strenuously sought to render the sacrifice more

palatable by procuring counter concessions with regard to the princes and states dependent upon France, and by modifying the language of the treaty. He told Lord Aberdeen (so the latter wrote to Castlereagh) that

> though he was ready to make the same sacrifices for peace as when he first came to Châtillon, we [the allies] had done everything in our power by the form of the *projet* to make it difficult. He said that he must be supposed to know his own master, and that he was satisfied he might have so changed the form, without altering the substance, as to make it palatable to Bonaparte instead of being revolting.

Lord Aberdeen told him that there was 'no intention to offend or degrade, and that if the provisions were substantially obtained no attachment existed to a particular phraseology.' Caulaincourt particularly complained of the insertion of an article for the abolition of the slave trade:

> 'a fit article to insert in a treaty with *Denmark*, but not with us. If you wish to abolish the slave trade we will meet you halfway, and arrange it between ourselves, but the compulsory article you have inserted can never be tolerated by a great people, who are not yet in a situation to be insulted with perfect impunity.' Again, he said: 'You represent all Europe. You say you treat for your allies, and profess to bind them by their engagements, and yet you offer your *good offices* in order to persuade Sweden to give up Guadaloupe to France.' He said that if there were anything in the world which could be revolting to Bonaparte, it was to employ *good offices* with *Bernadotte* in order to obtain the colony. He said a good deal about the personal character of Bonaparte, and how much would be done by a little attention to manner. He spoke in perfectly good humour, and said all this in a half-laughing manner.

But though negotiations had been resumed, and the draft of a treaty agreed to among the allies, the uncertain attitude of the Emperor of Russia still caused great difficulties.

Castlereagh wrote to Lord Aberdeen on the 25th:

> The political question has been miserably prejudiced by opposite extremes of mismanagement; at one time too proud to listen to anything, at another so impatient to be delivered

from the pressure of our enemy as to make our propositions at Châtillon almost ludicrous.

Lord Aberdeen continued desirous to effect peace, though quite aware of the unpopularity which would in England attach to any peace made with Bonaparte. 'If he lives,' he wrote, 'you must make it, for there is no chance of any other person. . . . The terms of peace are unobjectionable—in a word, we insist on the limits of ancient France as a basis, preliminary to any other proceeding. This ought to satisfy you. As to making war against the man, it may become necessary, but must be hopeless so long as the people adhere to him.' But the chief reason which weighed with Lord Aberdeen in desiring peace was the apprehension caused him by the mutual jealousies of the great powers. Writing to Castlereagh on the 28th, he says:

> The enemy is, in my view, a source of danger much less to be dreaded than what arises among ourselves. I cannot too often represent to you the real state of the minds of those weak men by whom Europe is governed. The seeming agreement at Langres covered distrust and hate. A little success will cement them again, but if they are to be severely tried by adversity their dissolution is certain. It is not a bystander who speaks, but one who knows what their *real* feelings are, and who knows that they are actuated by feelings more than by principle. In all events I am heartily rejoiced that you are in a situation to see and judge for yourself in all things. It will do you no harm to see and know the interior of a coalition.

On February 28, no answer having been returned by Caulaincourt to the *projet* submitted to him for acceptance ten days previously, he was informed that if another ten days elapsed without any reply being given it would be regarded as a refusal on the part of France to entertain the proposals of the allies. For ten days, therefore, the conferences were suspended; the plenipotentiaries remained idle, and unpleasantly situated in the midst of a hostile population.

The peasants are rapidly arming (writes Lord Aberdeen on the 28th), and the people of the town go out in parties to hunt and shoot the stragglers. They have killed about forty Austrian soldiers between this place and Dijon. They appear to be most enraged in the immediate neighbourhood of this place, and we are advised not to go far from the gates. The Mayor has published a most touching address to the inhabitants on our behalf, from which one would almost imagine they were anthropophagi, and required much persuasion to prevent them from devouring us.

On March 10th Caulaincourt presented to the Conference a long note arguing against the proposals of the allies as a whole. He was at once told that this was not an answer to their *projet*, and he then produced a list of the cessions which Napoleon was ready to make. This list, Lord Aberdeen expressed his conviction to Lord Castlereagh, had not been received by Caulaincourt from his master, but had been composed at Châtillon. The Duke of Vicenza was informed that this paper, though an acceptance in part of the proposals of the allies, was not that absolute reply to them for which they had a right to look, and on the 13th he was pressed to return, within twenty-four hours, either an acceptance or refusal of the terms submitted to him, or to propose a *contre-projet* of his own. After a good deal of fencing on his part, and a not unreasonable demand for time to communicate again with his Court, he agreed to present a *contre-projet* in twenty-four hours, and actually did so in forty-eight. This *contre-projet* contained no renunciation of possessions acquired by France since 1792, excepting such as were specifically named, and consequently maintained the Rhine throughout its course as the frontier of France. It proposed to recognise Eugène Beauharnais as King of Italy, to which state the Ionian Islands were to be attached. Stipulations were also introduced for the retention of the principality of Benevento by

Talleyrand, of the principality of Neufchâtel by Berthier, of the grand duchies of Lucca and Parma by Eliza Bonaparte, and of the grand duchy of Berg by a son of King Louis and Queen Hortense. These propositions were unanimously considered by the plenipotentiaries to be inadmissible even as topics for discussion, but they were nevertheless referred by them to the allied sovereigns, by whom they were at once rejected. The conferences therefore terminated, and Lord Aberdeen returned to the allied headquarters on March 21. Four days later Caulaincourt desired to accept the allied terms as they stood, and intimated his readiness to proceed to the headquarters of the army for that purpose. It was then too late.

M. Thiers [1] more than insinuates that the allies never intended to make peace, and that the terms offered were only proposed in order to be rejected. That this was not the case as regards the earlier stage of the negotiation, prior to its interruption by the Emperor of Russia, the short note of Lord Castlereagh, which I have already quoted, abundantly proves. That the negotiators on the spot did not after the resumption of the conferences *expect* peace, is true, but that some at least of them desired it is not less certain. That it was perhaps less desired by the members of Government at home, who did not see so closely the dangers to which the alliance was exposed, is also probable; but they too were prepared to accept it. Lord Liverpool wrote to Lord Aberdeen so late as March 21:

> Peace, if it comes, will be most unpopular in this country. If it can be obtained, however, upon our own terms, I shall not fear the result. We shall have played a straight game, and it is a problem, to say the least, what may be the ultimate consequence of embarking in the war upon a new principle. We must not, however, lower our terms.

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[1] *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire*, tom. xvii.

And Lord Harrowby on the 11th had written :

If your terms were yesterday accepted we shall feel that we ought to be more glad than we shall be. . . . Whatever other demerits we *blocks* may have, we have at least the merit of jogging on side by side with great cordiality. We shall all swing together whenever your signature at Châtillon, or elsewhere, brings us to the gallows, for nothing but 'no peace with Bonaparte' is to be heard from the Land's End to Berwick.

Until the conclusion of the conferences at Châtillon Lord Aberdeen had shown himself strongly in favour of peace with Napoleon, but after the failure of that negotiation he began to think more favourably of the restoration of the Bourbons. He wrote from Dijon on the 29th March :

We negotiated in the hope of securing such a peace as was the real object of the war. This endeavour has failed. Bonaparte has shown himself too obstinate to yield to such conditions as are indispensable for the tranquillity of Europe. You will recollect that I have always represented peace as the grand object of the French nation ; and this is the engine by which we must work, and by which all may be done. We must show that the return of the Bourbons will bring peace, and that without their return it is not attainable in consequence of the ambition of Bonaparte. When convinced of this fact, the French people may be led to endure any prince, or support any pretender from whom they can receive the blessing they desire. These are my views, which are formed by the present position of affairs, and which, though different in the application, are consistent in principle with those I have always entertained. For, as you justly say, he is a fool who does not allow circumstances to modify his sentiments and system.

And on the 4th of April, also from Dijon, he wrote :

It happened that the news of the taking of Paris and the defeat of the enemy arrived here this morning. I had all the principal persons of all the allied nations to dine with me. We appeared with the white cockade, which has been generally adopted by the inhabitants of this town. This step was the more necessary as the Emperor of Russia in his declaration does not say a syllable of the Bourbons ; it was, therefore, incumbent on us to explain the sense in which we understood that document. The first toast I gave was Louis XVIII. This will do great good, for it will do much to check the intrigue which we know exists to a great extent between our friend the Prince Royal and the French Government.

Lord Aberdeen was, however, no believer in the permanence of the Bourbon restoration. He at once perceived that they were only accepted as the pledge of an at least temporary peace, and that, provided peace was secured, the nation

would have hailed the re-establishment of the Republic, or any other system, with the same satisfaction. . . . The people showed it very clearly by their exclamations when the allies entered Paris : 'Vive la Paix, Vive les Alliés, Vive qui voudra!'

Again, after a month's residence in Paris, he wrote :

Louis XVIII. has *no root*, and may be upset by a Republic at any time that a comparative degree of prosperity and quiet has been restored. . . . On the day of the king's entry the Guards cried out, 'Vive Napoléon, Vive l'Empereur!' even close to the king's carriage. It is very lucky for the Bourbons that the tyranny of Bonaparte was so much exercised in carrying on the war so unmercifully; none of his acts of interior administration would produce any effect against him.

Lord Aberdeen accompanied the army to Paris, and was one of the plenipotentiaries for the settlement of the general treaty of peace. As Lord Castlereagh was himself present, Lord Aberdeen took but a subordinate though not unimportant part in the negotiation. He was, for several reasons, most eager to return to England, but Lord Castlereagh, as was usual in their intercourse, prevailed, and he remained at Paris till the signature of the treaty.

The baseness of the desertions from Napoleon of his most trusted generals greatly disgusted Lord Aberdeen, and yet more the insolence which accompanied it, and which he describes as 'insufferable.' One singular instance is worth recording. 'I dined yesterday,' wrote he to Lord Abercorn, 'with a party similar to that I met at Cathcart's,[1]

[1] 'I dined yesterday with Cathcart, and was the only civilian among a military party made for Wellington. Seven marshals of different nations were at dinner. So many, I suppose, never met before.'

with the addition of Ney and Marmont. Only imagine the effrontery of Ney, by whom I sat, entertaining me, in the presence of Lord Wellington and the victorious generals of the allies, by proof of the ease with which the expedition to England would have succeeded! This was a piece of taste and good breeding to which none but a Frenchman could be equal. I do not think he is likely to return to the subject.'

This was, however, but insolence, more or less pardonable on the part of a humiliated and conquered enemy, desiring to show that he too might have achieved a triumph had the wheel of fortune taken another turn; but what can be said for the callous want of patriotism of Fouché? He, in conversation with Lord Aberdeen, reproached the allies for having left France too strong, and suggested that they ought to have parcelled it out into a number of Grand Duchies. On its being remarked that Frenchmen would not have endured a foreign rule, he intimated that there were Frenchmen who had held territory in, or derived titles from, foreign places, who would be quite ready to exchange them for the sovereignty of a French province, and gave it to be understood that there would at all events be no scruple on that head on the part of the Duke of Otranto!

Immediately after the signature of the treaty Lord Aberdeen started for England, taking the treaty with him in his carriage.

CHAPTER III

SECOND MARRIAGE—PRIVATE LIFE: 1814–1827

Lord Aberdeen's second marriage—Domestic life—Letter to Castlereagh on Greek insurrection—The Aberdeen Acts—Joins the Duke of Wellington's Cabinet—Becomes Foreign Secretary.

LORD ABERDEEN'S sister-in-law and correspondent, Lady Maria Hamilton, whose health had long been precarious, died January 21, 1814. Her death had been a heavy blow to Lord Aberdeen, who was tenderly attached to her. On reaching London on the 31st May he found Argyll House unprepared for his reception, his arrival having at the last been unexpected. He went on to Lord Harrowby's house in Grosvenor Square, and there learnt that a fresh calamity had befallen the Abercorn family. Lord Hamilton had just expired.

The death of Lord Hamilton had consequences of the utmost importance to Lord Aberdeen.

Lord Abercorn had seen his infant granddaughters deprived of a mother's care by Lady Aberdeen's death. His yet younger grandsons were now without a father, and with the whole force of his imperious nature he at once determined to bring about a marriage between his late daughter's husband and his son's widow. He succeeded in accomplishing his desire, though there were no slight obstacles to be overcome. On July 15, 1815, Lord Aberdeen and Lady Hamilton[1] were married at the Priory. With her he lived

[1] Harriet Douglas, sister of the seventeenth Earl of Morton.

happily for eighteen years. Though strikingly handsome, the new Lady Aberdeen had not all the beauty of her predecessor, nor was she her intellectual equal; but her devotion to her husband was unbounded, and each year as it passed saw them united in closer bonds of tranquil affection and mutual esteem.

Lord Abercorn died January 18, 1818. Lord Aberdeen succeeded to a large share of his personal property, and became guardian to the infant heir. From that time until 1834 the Priory was Lord Aberdeen's habitual home. His summer visits to Scotland were still made, but Stanmore was now for many years the centre of his life. Situated as it is within a few miles of London, he was able to assemble with ease at the Priory a constant succession of guests distinguished in literature, art, and public life. Above all, it was associated with the most important incidents of his domestic life. When, in 1848, it was let to the Queen Dowager, with a view to its ultimate sale, Lord Aberdeen wrote:

> Queen Adelaide's visit seems to have been a most successful affair, but I am heartily glad that I was not there. Everything in this world is so transitory that as we advance in life we must of course expect to see great changes. To me, the Priory at all times exhibits many such, but these are all changes in the order of Providence and beyond control. The present one I cannot help regarding in a different light. It is more than forty years since I first was taught to consider the Priory as a home, and for many years I occupied it as its master. I never now go there without going to seek the dead, as well as the living. But I have not the least reason to complain. Every man has a right to do what he likes with his own; and all this is matter of little consequence. It will soon be of still less.

But greatly attached though he had become to the Priory, his original dislike of Haddo was rapidly giving way to a very different feeling. Residence there was no longer a penance, and instead of rejoicing to escape from it, he

began to regret the day when he was obliged to leave it. To the people of the district he speedily became attached; the species of authority he enjoyed among them he fully appreciated; and now that his earliest improvements were beginning to show their effects in the altered face of the country, he found the place growing ever dearer and dearer to him. This is very evident from his letters to Lady Aberdeen, who did not always accompany him to Haddo. In 1821 he writes to her:

I am a good deal tired to-night, for from eleven o'clock till eight I did not sit down an instant. I staked out two or three considerable plantations with Johnston, and I took a couple of hours' hard work in thinning the plantation at the bottom of the garden, which is so thick that the trees are injuring each other. I principally cut down poplars, many of which were fifteen and eighteen inches in circumference at the root, which is an astonishing growth. I can tell you that, if I live ten years more, I shall make this really a fine place. You have no idea how well it looks from the new road. . . . I rode to Formartine, and walked all over the ground on that side of the river, which is to be planted. It was really quite delightful; a bright sun shone on the wood and rocks opposite, and the leaves just beginning to change colour made it extremely beautiful. I sat for an hour on the rock, and on the very spot where our tower is to be. I built it half a dozen times, and indulged in day dreams, which to me have always been a great enjoyment. While ruminating there a couple of ravens were sailing round, and a falcon darted from the rock opposite. I could hardly tear myself away. When you are next here, if you are not strong enough to go on a pony, I must positively have you carried to the spot in a *lettica*.

And in the following year he writes of the same spot:

I went to Formartine yesterday alone. But you know I do not mind being alone, and particularly when I can indulge in delightful day dreams. I went to our tower, which I speedily built; other alterations of different kinds I performed with as little difficulty, and sitting under the rock without a human being in sight I anticipated the effects of time upon the scene. But, sweetheart, will your love bear its effects as well? for our tower owes its existence, even in the mind, to a feeling of love, and without it would be annihilated and vanish. Without it all the joys of life become flat, stale, and unprofitable.

Strong, however, as was his affection for his second wife, Lord Aberdeen never for a moment forgot the idol of his youth. This devotion to his first wife and all belonging to her naturally caused Lady Aberdeen some uneasiness, not always wholly concealed, and that feeling was strengthened by the intense solicitude which, after the death, preceded by a long and painful illness, of his second daughter Caroline, Lord Aberdeen manifested as to the health, always very precarious, of his two remaining daughters.

These impressions Lord Aberdeen exerted himself by every means in his power to combat and remove, nor did Lady Aberdeen's love and admiration of her husband permit such appeals to be made in vain. When, in 1824, Lady Jane, at the age of eighteen, and just after her first entrance into the world, died suddenly after only a few hours' illness, the shock entirely overcame her, and led her to share her husband's absorbing anxiety as to the one remaining child of his first marriage, Alice, who after apparent recovery from several long and dangerous illnesses, now showed increasing symptoms of decay, and faded away slowly before their eyes. On her account Lord Aberdeen spent the three next winters at Nice. To her he devoted every moment of his spare time, and to be with her he retired almost wholly from active life. What were politics, art, or literature to him, as compared with the child, who formed his last link on earth to the being whom he had adored, and who was herself endowed with every bodily and mental charm?

Yet during the period of which this chapter treats public life had not been altogether neglected by him, and to it we must now turn.

Lord Castlereagh had wished Lord Aberdeen to retain his Embassy, and to return to Germany as one of the plenipotentiaries at the Congress of Vienna. This Lord

Aberdeen declined to do. He offered to go to Vienna for the purpose of investing the Emperor with the Order of the Garter, but not as a negotiator. He knew that Castlereagh himself, and the Duke of Wellington, were both going to Vienna, and that his own part there must necessarily be a more subordinate one than he cared to assume, while his views on many points differed too materially from Castlereagh's to admit of his easily taking part in the Congress. Their friendship remained unbroken, but it was never again quite so close and cordial as it had been before 1814.

But Lord Aberdeen was still frequently consulted in confidence before decisions of importance were taken, and the despatches in which those decisions were embodied were not unfrequently submitted to his criticism. In 1821, Castlereagh sent him the draft of a despatch he was about to forward to St. Petersburg, deprecating hostilities against the Porte or any encouragement of the Greek insurrection. In returning this draft, Lord Aberdeen addressed Castlereagh at great length. The part afterwards taken by him as minister in 1829 and in 1853 renders it of interest to show what his views were at the commencement of the Greek insurrection, and I accordingly insert an extract from this letter:

> I cannot help expressing my belief that, notwithstanding your exertions to preserve peace, you are destined ultimately to fail in this object. . . . Circumstances in my opinion render it extremely doubtful whether the Emperor may possess the power, whatever may be his disposition, to abstain from hostile interference. I refer to the effect produced on the minds of his own people and throughout Europe by the Greek Insurrection. On this subject I would bespeak your patience while I offer a few remarks made under impressions deeply felt, and which may tend to modify in some degree the line of policy you have adopted. The existence of the Greek Insurrection would give an entirely new character to a Turkish war. It would no longer be a dispute between neighbouring Governments for frontiers or provinces, but the cause itself would be in a measure sanctified, and the end and aim of the contest enlarged in proportion. The attempt of any Government n Europe to support the Turkish

power for the avowed purpose of riveting the chains of their unhappy Christian subjects would scarcely be tolerated. I beg entirely to disclaim any view of this question influenced by the associations of ancient history, or under the effects of early enthusiasm. In truth, when we hear of the descendants of the ancient Greeks, we hear of that which has little reality. The Christian population of Greece is a bastard and mongrel breed derived from many sources—Romans, Sclavonians, Gauls, Catalans, Venetians, and others ; they have but little connection with the ancient Greeks in blood. Still, they are Christians, quick-witted, and capable of any degree of improvement. You have yourself admitted that the first and natural impulse of every mind must be in favour of their exertions. If this is the case with every man of common humanity in Europe what must we expect to be the feelings of the Greeks themselves? You are good enough to pray in the despatch that '*Time and Providence*' may bring relief to their sufferings, but can we be surprised at their desire to hasten this time, and to assist the action of Providence? Can we in their situation call it impatience? I think not. This is a struggle to which nothing in the civilised world can present the least analogy. It may not be easy to acquiesce in the abuses of the despotic Governments of Europe ; but in doing so I have always felt that, whatever their vices, there was little actual tyranny in any of them in the most essential points which constitute the happiness of their subjects, and even in the worst there is always the hope and prospect of amendment without the necessity for previous destruction. The gradual increase of knowledge and wealth among the people must always in these times tend to modify the most arbitrary power. But the slavery of the Greeks admits of no alleviation, and the very principle of the Turkish Government forbids all improvement in their condition. Other conquerors, however ferocious, have mixed with the conquered, and have gradually become one people ; but these are as perfectly separate and distinct as they were four hundred years ago, when Mahomed II. crossed the Bosphorus, a nation of masters and a nation of slaves. It is true that the Greeks have of late years made considerable advances in the acquisition of knowledge and of wealth, but it is clear that every step they take in their progress towards civilisation must only make them feel their degraded situation more acutely, and instead of diminishing must only increase their sufferings. It is quite impossible that we should expect them to enter into general views of preserving the tranquillity of Europe, or to participate in our dread of commotions or our love of peace, in the blessings of which they have no share whatever. Having personally witnessed their condition, I can have no hesitation in thinking them fully justified in using every possible means

to shake off the truly horrible yoke under which they groan. Their actual situation is a solecism in the political world, and when it is changed, as it infallibly must be, and that in no long time, posterity will believe with difficulty that what we now daily witness ever existed. Under these circumstances, although it may perhaps be the duty of a prudent Government to observe neutrality in the contest now existing between the unhappy Greeks and their masters, this, it seems to me, must be the utmost sacrifice to make. What might be the result of the unaided efforts of the Greeks it is difficult to say. The general opinion appears to be against the probability of their success; but I know not why, for they have sufficient numbers, and I am sure they have sufficient cause, to animate their exertions. If, after all, the freedom of the Greeks should be accomplished through Russian means, and should be made subservient to the aggrandisement of this already colossal power, I admit that the event, both in its progress and in its completion, could not be contemplated without feelings of alarm. But is it impossible to avert these consequences by taking part in a settlement which sooner or later will surely be effected, and which, if effected without our aid, can at best, if accomplished by the Greeks alone, earn us no goodwill, and which, if carried out by Russian arms, may seriously imperil our most vital interests

Castlereagh took the letter good-naturedly. He would, he said, be much more ready to adopt a plan of Greek regeneration prepared by Lord Aberdeen than one 'framed by the mongrel minister' [Capo d'Istrias], 'who would probably be the draftsman of such a scheme at St. Petersburg;' but he was sure Lord Aberdeen would not be surprised that he 'did not think it prudent to occupy his time in Downing Street by taking with his own hands the initiative in such portentous experiments.' Lord Aberdeen subscribed to the Greek cause, and attended a meeting in its favour. But all the pressure that the Government could exercise was put upon him to detach him from the movement. Lord Bathurst wrote with earnestness and dismay:

Consider that if you lend the weight of your name to such a proceeding it must seriously embarrass Government, and tend to raise a cry it will be most difficult to manage. Consider that the Greek cause is supported by every Jacobin in France

and England. Consider that you will appear to sanction all the atrocities committed by the Greeks. Will you subscribe to a cause you see your namesake and kinsman has abandoned as too disgraceful to belong to?

Lord Aberdeen had now arrived at a point at which further public action on behalf of the insurgents would have led to a breach with all those with whom he lived in habitual intimacy. From this he shrank. His constitutional indisposition to self-assertion led him to avoid putting himself forward as a leader in action, little as he cared for being alone in opinion; while his habitual modesty prevented his ever seeing the importance of his own position, or that it might be his duty, however little it might be his inclination, publicly to declare his views. To him it appeared to matter little whether one man more or less took part in any movement or abstained from it. It is, therefore, not improbable that he would under any circumstances have abstained from further participation in the Philhellene movement; but decision was unnecessary, for at this juncture he found himself withdrawn from London and from public life by the long and dangerous illness of his youngest daughter. He employed a part of this leisure in completing an essay on the Principles of Grecian Architecture, which he had before commenced as a preface to an edition of Vitruvius, and which he published in a separate form in the course of 1822.

In the autumn of that year he took part in the reception of the King at Edinburgh. While there he received the news of Castlereagh's suicide. Though for some years their intimacy had not been what it once was, the shock was great to Lord Aberdeen's sensitive nature.

In 1825 he introduced a Bill which had far more important effects than were at the time perceived. As is well known, the system of Scotch entails was remarkable for its

great strictness and complexity. A Scotch entail could not be broken save by Act of Parliament, and almost every Scotch estate was entailed. Although the life tenant of an entailed estate might, to a certain extent, put burdens upon the property in order to effect improvements on it, he was unable to make the smallest provision for his widow or children. Lord Aberdeen's Act gave this power. It was accepted by the proprietors of entailed estates as a welcome relief, and few of them perceived that, this step once taken, others must follow which would be less palatable to them.

It is odd (wrote Lord Aberdeen to his friend John Hope, Dean of the Faculty of Advocates) that no one should see that if the tenant for life may transmit the estate to his successor heavily burdened, that successor may with justice demand that he should have the option of assuming those burdens or of disposing of the estate to those who may with less difficulty bear them. I am not sorry that it is so, for the discovery would render the passage of my Bill less easy. I do not think I am called on myself to raise obstacles in its way, but if the objection be made I shall be prepared to meet it. I do not myself regard such consequences with any alarm. To give the possessor of an estate, who may have no personal means independent of it, the right to provide from it for his wife and children, is an act of bare justice to him and to them. It should not be denied because its grant may sooner or later have consequences which, if not effected violently, or with too great rapidity, are perhaps not to be regretted. The feudal system has perished, and what remains of it is destined to ultimate extinction. We still preserve some of its institutions, because they are still useful. But these too will disappear as their utility ceases or becomes less apparent. This may or may not be a matter for regret; but, provided it is not effected by means of revolution or of measures inflicting suffering and loss upon multitudes of harmless individuals, can it be regarded as an evil? Few will deny that the changes in the position of the great and of the people, which have steadily advanced in the last few centuries, have been attended with advantage. Is it reasonable to suppose that they have now terminated, or presumptuous to hope that, if only made when obviously called for, they will be accompanied by similar benefits? But I admit that this reasoning would not recommend my Bill to the House of Lords, and am therefore glad that the necessity for urging it has not arisen. Personally, I am much of Gibbon's opinion,

that primogeniture is an 'insolent prerogative'; but I am sure that its abolition would at this moment produce mischiefs not to be counterbalanced by any corresponding advantage. It may not always be so. But I must stop, or you will think Hudson Gurney quite justified in styling me 'a Jacobin'!

During the years between 1822 and 1828, however, his friendship with the Duke of Wellington became much more close and intimate, and whilst I doubt whether their intercourse and concert in politics much altered his opinions, it certainly restrained their expression.

He refused a seat in Canning's Cabinet, but when a year later he was asked by the Duke of Wellington to join him in forming an Administration, he readily consented to do so. The Duke told him that, had all the former Cabinet retired, he had destined him for the Foreign Office, but that, as Lord Dudley had elected to remain, he must, of course, retain the office he already held. He therefore wished Lord Aberdeen to accept an office—that of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster—which, having little business of its own, would enable him to devote his time to foreign affairs, and to the assistance of Lord Dudley in their management. Such assistance Lord Dudley was himself aware that he needed; his habits of procrastination, his excessive indecision, and his slow and painful style of composition, both in writing and oratory, rendering him quite unable to keep abreast of the business of his office. Being on terms of the most cordial and intimate friendship with Lord Aberdeen, he welcomed his aid without reserve or jealousy, good-humouredly styling him his 'coadjutor *jure successionis*.' That succession was not long in coming. In May 1828, Lord Dudley resigned, along with Huskisson and Palmerston, and Lord Aberdeen received the seals as Foreign Secretary.

CHAPTER IV

FOREIGN OFFICE: 1828–30

War between Turkey and Russia—Choice of a Sovereign for Greece—Affairs of Portugal—Expedition to Algiers—French Revolution of 1830.

THE correspondence of the Foreign Office is now more than seven times as great as in 1828, but it was even then of vast bulk, and dealt with the most various subjects. It is beyond my power, within the limits assigned to me, to do more than indicate the chief transactions in which during Lord Aberdeen's tenure of the office he took part, and the principles by which his action was guided.

When he became Secretary of State he found Russia and the Porte at war. He also found the Greek insurgents in possession of the Morea, and the return thither of Turkish troops prohibited by the Powers allied to carry out the Treaty of London of 1827. The Greek claims formed no part of the ostensible grievances which had led Russia to declare war, but the two questions were, of course, closely connected, and the line adopted by Lord Aberdeen with regard to them has been at different times held up to popular disapproval from two opposite points of view, and for reasons not only inconsistent but contradictory. In 1828–30 popular sympathy was with the Greeks, and with Russia as the enemy of the Porte and the friend of Greece. Lord Aberdeen was accordingly taunted with

entertaining Turkish sympathies, with want of generosity towards Russia, and with a desire to cripple the resources and limit the extent of the new Greek State. Lord John Russell expressed delight at each fresh Russian success, and Lord Palmerston asked why the Turks should be maintained at Constantinople. Twenty-five years later, on the eve of the Crimean War, popular opinion had veered round to a totally opposite point. Those who had hailed the defeats of the Porte with joy, were now its warmest friends: while Lord Aberdeen was denounced for not having actively supported Turkey against Russia in 1828, and was stigmatised by the public voice as having at that time betrayed her interests for the benefit of her revolted subjects. Responsible politicians were not ashamed to style him the author of the Treaty of Adrianople, and Kinglake has blamed him for not having accepted the invitation which he erroneously believed to have been given by Austria to oppose by force the progress of the Russian arms. Another thirty years has brought another change in popular sentiment, which is now once more, generally, on the anti-Turkish side; and in Mr. Walpole's 'History of England since 1815' we find sharp reprehension of the policy of the Wellington Government, as having been unfriendly to the cause of liberty and progress, and unduly solicitous for the maintenance of the Ottoman power.

Of these contradictory charges that which attributes to Lord Aberdeen any sympathy with Russia may be dismissed as purely imaginary. The other has such foundation as may be discovered in distrust of the professions of the Russian Government, and apprehension of the consequences of Russian conquest. That distrust and apprehension were clearly shown in a note addressed to Prince Lieven by Lord Aberdeen immediately on his

accession to office, and in the instructions given by him to Lord Heytesbury, whom he at once despatched as Ambassador to Russia. Lord Heytesbury was speedily convinced by the Czar that he had no thought of aggrandisement; and assurances to this effect were conveyed to Lord Aberdeen in despatches, which were perused by him 'with interest, but not without concern,' and which gave no warning of an event which brought Russia and England to the very verge of war.

The Emperor Nicholas, who had previously promised to abstain from any exercise of his rights as a belligerent in the Mediterranean, suddenly, and without any previous communication with his allies, directed the blockade of the Dardanelles. On the receipt of this intelligence, Lord Aberdeen, without even waiting to consult the Cabinet, informed Lord Heytesbury that the step taken would not be tolerated.

> We have made the King declare to Parliament (he wrote) that which the Emperor is now determined to falsify. Even if we could be base enough to disgrace ourselves by submission, I am quite persuaded that the country would never endure it.

The abstract right of Russia to institute the blockade was admitted, but surprise and displeasure were expressed at its exercise, after the declaration of the Emperor in a contrary sense; and Lord Heytesbury was instructed to demand the exemption from the operation of the blockade of all British vessels, *however loaded*, which might have sailed on the strength of the King's declaration. The despatch thus concludes:

> If the Russian Government should persevere in refusing to listen to the propositions of Your Excellency, you may add that the officer commanding the additional force, which has been sent to the Mediterranean, will be ordered to give that effectual protection to British vessels, which Your Excellency has failed to obtain from the justice of His Imperial Majesty.

The Russian Government yielded, and the obnoxious orders were withdrawn; but all naval co-operation with Russia in carrying out the Treaty of London ceased.

War against Turkey had been commenced by the Czar without remonstrance from any Power in Europe, and indeed with an acknowledgment from most of them that he had right on his side. In the earlier stages of that contest the Russian arms were by no means successful; but Lord Aberdeen felt, and avowed, that their ultimate triumph was secure, and that it might so affect the interests of England as to demand, at any risk, the assumption of a very different tone from that which had been hitherto employed; for in 1828, as in 1853, Lord Aberdeen regarded the possession of Constantinople by Russia as a danger to Europe.

The aid of Austria was requisite if this danger was to be effectually averted, and to obtain it Lord Aberdeen, on December 26, 1828, addressed a long and very able despatch to Lord Cowley, the English Ambassador at Vienna. The operations of the Russian armies had, he admitted,

> undoubtedly been attended with heavy losses of every description—in men, in horses, in stores and baggage, and, above all, in the temporary destruction at least of that character of invincibility which had perhaps been too readily granted to the arms of His Imperial Majesty. But let us not deceive ourselves. These losses are not overwhelming, neither are they irreparable.

The causes which led to the comparative failure of the campaign were then shown to be such as were not likely to recur, and Prince Metternich was urged to consider

> the inevitable consequences of a successful invasion of the Turkish Empire. Let His Highness contrast the situation and character of the Ottoman dominions with those of any other European states. In ordinary cases, even after the most sanguinary wars and the most extensive conquests, peace heals all wounds. Governments may be changed, and dynasties

overthrown or destroyed, without the general frame of society and the due exercise of lawful authority being materially affected. But if the Turkish power be once destroyed, its reconstruction is impossible.

So long as it was the first duty of England to require from the Porte its assent to the provisions of the Treaty of London, it was impossible to take her part as against Russia. Prince Metternich was therefore entreated to use his influence at the Porte to induce it to assent to a settlement of the Greek question. Were that once disposed of, the Emperor Nicholas would probably be ready to make peace on easy terms ; but if not, it would then be comparatively easy to compel him to do so.

Prince Metternich, in reply to this overture, denied the accuracy of the assumptions on which it was based. He professed to believe that the campaign of 1829 would not be more successful than that of 1828, and that the Turks were able to hold their own without support or assistance. In the course of the following spring another attempt was made to induce him to prevail on the Turks to assent to the establishment of a Greek State, and thus clear the way for effective interposition on their behalf ; but he replied that

Austria was in a very embarrassing position, and that he believed the safest course for her to pursue would be to abstain altogether from interfering upon the present occasion.

It is therefore an error, though one very generally entertained, to suppose that Prince Metternich desired to undertake an armed intervention on behalf of Turkey. The attitude he really occupied is thus pithily and accurately described by the Duke of Wellington in a letter to Lord Aberdeen :

Metternich is garrulous—he is not very fond of the Russians, but very much so of talking and writing upon the extent and consequence of their losses, which, as usual in persons of that

disposition, he exaggerates ; and boasts, probably with some truth, that if the consequences could be prevented, it is in the power of his master totally to destroy their combination for the next campaign. But he no more thinks of interfering by arms than he does of attacking France ; and he would act more wisely if he kept himself quiet altogether and was silent. I'll engage for it that the Emperor of Russia is more afraid of us, who are as quiet as mice, than he is of the Austrians, though the Austrians have more in their power immediately.

The campaign proceeded, and Lord Aberdeen's predictions were fully verified.

The advance of the Russian forces was unchecked, and although an absence of all designs of aggrandisement continued to be proclaimed, no explanation was offered of the intentions of the Emperor, and it began to be rumoured that heavy pecuniary indemnities and some territorial cessions would be included in the terms of peace. Lord Aberdeen's communications, both with the Russian Government and with Prince Lieven, became more and more animated ; and a change having taken place in the composition of the French Cabinet, he thought it worth while to invite its co-operation :

even although it should be certain that every word of the despatch would be immediately communicated to Russia.

But the French Government declined to assist in any measures to prevent the apparently approaching catastrophe ; and Prince Polignac saw, or professed to see, no reason to distrust the assurances of moderation already given by the Emperor of Russia.

It was therefore evident that England would be left to succour the Turks single-handed, if succour was to be afforded ; but, although unsupported by those to whom the preservation of the Ottoman power was apparently a matter of more immediate interest, the occupation of Constantinople by the Russians, however temporary its

nature, would have led to open collision. Peace was, however, concluded at Adrianople. It is now said that, had the weakness of the Russian army been properly estimated, the war would have been continued. The Russian army may have been greatly enfeebled by disease, but, whatever its condition, it must not be forgotten that a panic had seized the Turks, which rendered resistance difficult, if not impossible. I see no reason to doubt the accuracy of the picture drawn by the British Ambassador, Sir R. Gordon, a warm friend of the Turks, and strongly animated by anti-Russian and anti-Greek prejudices.

> Nothing (he wrote) but an immediate cessation of hostilities can possibly save this Empire from total destruction. The internal disorder is even more alarming than the danger with which it is threatened from without: disaffection and insubordination have reached the highest pitch. There no longer exists an embodied Turkish army; and the few scattered troops which the Russians have fallen in with decline to offer any resistance. . . . It is certain, so broken-hearted are the Turks, that if the Russians appeared with 10,000 men upon the heights above the capital, they might enter the next day, as at Adrianople, by capitulation; in ten days more they might be masters on both sides the Hellespont from Tenedos to the Black Sea.

However this might be, the Treaty of Adrianople was signed on September 14th. When the conditions of the peace were known, the Emperor of Austria and the King of France wrote to congratulate the Emperor Nicholas on the success which had attended his arms, and the moderation he had displayed. The King of England did not write a similar letter; on the contrary, Lord Aberdeen addressed a despatch to Lord Heytesbury, containing very severe criticism upon the terms of the treaty.

Prince Metternich did not approve the treaty, but continued to urge the absolute necessity of close union between Russia and Austria, as a counterpoise to the revolutionary

tendencies of France. While doing so he let drop the remark that the adoption of a more decided tone by Great Britain might have prevented many of the calamities which had fallen on the Turkish Empire, a remark since applied to the transactions of a later period.

Lord Aberdeen replied to this observation by inquiring:

At what moment would Prince Metternich have recommended the adoption of a more decided tone?

When the Emperor Nicholas declared war against the Porte, he exercised the right belonging to every independent sovereign, of obtaining redress for injuries alleged to have been committed against his own honour and the interest of his subjects. All the Great Powers of the Continent, not excepting Austria, recognised the justice of these hostilities. It was otherwise with His Majesty's Government.

The objections felt and urged by Great Britain to the commencement of the war, her insistence on the abandonment of pretensions injurious to the dignity of the allies, and her refusal to acknowledge the blockade of the Dardanelles, were recapitulated, and the despatch thus continued:

At what subsequent period, we may ask, would it have been proper or justifiable to have assumed this decided tone towards Russia? Prince Metternich cannot surely mean that we might acquiesce in the declaration of war by the Emperor Nicholas, and yet feel ourselves at liberty to quarrel with him for carrying it on with vigour and success; in a word, that we should expect Russia to make war with reference principally to our convenience, rather than in conformity with her own policy, and to the promotion of her own interests.

Had the Turkish Government manifested any desire for the restoration of peace; had reasonable propositions been rejected by the Cabinet of St. Petersburg; there might, indeed, have been some ground for the intervention of a neutral power. But it is well known that the reverse of this is the fact; it is notorious that the pacific overtures of the Emperor were more than once rejected by the blind obstinacy of the Porte.

It is no doubt gratifying that the Austrian Cabinet should look to the tone of Great Britain as the means of averting

evils which in their consequences may too probably endanger the peace of the world. Having no separate objects to attain, and having nothing to fear, it has been peculiarly our office to watch over the peaceful relations of States, and by upholding the established balance to promote the security and prosperity of each. From this office we shall not shrink; but however prompt to act, when called upon exclusively by a regard for the honour and dignity of Great Britain, Prince Metternich will probably admit that when the interest is European it is reasonable that we should look for European concert and support.

The motive which led Lord Aberdeen to deprecate any diminution of the strength of Turkey was not love of the Turks, but apprehension of the designs of Russia. The same motive induced him to look less favourably on the Greek cause than he would otherwise have done; and, as we have already seen, he in fact had done only a few years previously. The Greek insurrection was mainly directed by Russia, and had at its head a Russian minister who had filled high office at St. Petersburg. To enlarge and strengthen Greece was apparently to give to Russia the control of the Southern Provinces of European Turkey. This was the cause of a desire to prevent the Sovereign of Greece from assuming a formally independent position, which would allow him to be practically the tool of Russia. By preserving the nominal suzerainty of the Sultan, the new State would, in foreign affairs at all events, be rendered unable to act in hostility to the Porte. There was another reason for desiring to restrict within moderate dimensions the demands of Greece, and that was the importance attached to placing the Porte in a position in which Great Britain would be free to give her a more unequivocal support. This was impossible so long as the Greek question was unsettled and the terms of the Treaty of London unfulfilled; but it was manifest that the more moderate the terms asked of the Turks the more chance there was that they would be

induced to grant them, and to reconsider the obstinate refusal they had hitherto given to all proposals on the subject. In reply to Lord Holland, Lord Aberdeen avowed, in the House of Lords, that he indeed regretted the weakness of Turkey, but 'not from any love of the Turks or of the Turkish Government. God forbid. I have seen and know the effect of the barbarous rule existing there, and nobody can be more alive to the horrors with which it abounds. But give me leave to say that the improvement of even Turkey may be purchased at too dear a rate, and I still think that the conquest of that country by Russia would be paying dear indeed for the amelioration of its condition.'

But the conclusion of the Treaty of Adrianople led Lord Aberdeen at once to abandon the hope he had entertained of finding in Turkey any effectual resistance to the progress of Russia. He now sought it in another direction, and from those with whom he had more natural sympathy.

In writing officially to his brother, Sir Robert Gordon, he says:

> The events of the war have clearly shown to the most incredulous, not only that the Porte was utterly unable to contend with any prospect of success against the arms of Russia, but that, trusting to its own resources and without foreign aid, the existence of the Turkish Empire may be said at this moment to depend upon the absolute will and pleasure of the Emperor Nicholas.
>
> We may justly deprecate that restless policy which, dissatisfied with whatever is established, eagerly anticipates change, and hoping for contingent good, does in truth only disturb the tranquillity of States. But the present moment offers a crisis in which common prudence demands that we should endeavour to prepare for the approach of those great events which, according to all appearance, cannot long be delayed. . . . We may perhaps be tempted to suspect that the hour long since predicted is about to arrive, and that, independently of all foreign or hostile impulse, this clumsy fabric of barbarous power will speedily crumble to pieces from its own inherent causes of decay. . . . We may still attempt to avert the period of its

final dissolution, and may possibly for a time succeed ; but whenever this feeble and precarious dominion shall cease, we ought not to occupy ourselves in vain efforts to restore its existence. Our object ought rather to be to find the means of supplying its place in a manner the most beneficial to the interests of civilisation and of peace.

. . . Whatever may have been its defective composition, a government which had maintained relations of peace with European courts for centuries was not to be wantonly destroyed in the mere hope of future improvement and at the risk of a general convulsion. But whenever this State, now hastening to its fall, shall be entirely overthrown, its reconstruction will be beyond our power, even should we possess the inclination to attempt it. We cannot be blind to the detestable character of Turkish tyranny. Every day renders more certain the impossibility of any European sympathy with a system founded upon ignorance and ferocity. And although, if necessary, we might reasonably expect support in resisting Christian aggrandisement and ambition, we could scarcely look to receive it in an attempt to restore a Mohammedan authority in Europe.

A guarantee of the integrity of the Ottoman dominions, if the inclination and policy of the powers of Christendom permitted them to enter into such an engagement, might preserve this Empire from hostile attack, but it could offer no real security against the causes of internal dissolution. Should such a general guarantee be entered into, it is probable that its greatest utility would be found in establishing the existence of a species of European concert at the time of emergency. . . .

The principle of the arrangement which we ought now to desire to see accomplished is that which should most effectually secure the tranquillity of the Levant during the remaining existence of the Turkish Government, and which, at the period of its dissolution, should offer in the Greek State a substitute whose interests we should naturally be called on to support in preference to the pretensions of all others.

Lord Aberdeen therefore proposed that Greece should be an independent State, free from even the nominal suzerainty of the Porte, and that its frontiers should receive a considerable extension beyond what was contemplated by the protocols of March 22, 1829.

In writing privately to Sir R. Gordon on the same day, Lord Aberdeen thus explained his views :

You know that to preserve the Porte substantially entire was my great wish. But the instant that the Russians had arrived

at Adrianople and we saw of what the Turkish Empire was composed, I changed my views, and determined to lay the foundation, if possible, of making something out of Greece. . . . I now look to establish a solid power in Greece with which we may form a natural connection, and which, if necessary, we may cordially support in future.

But Lord Aberdeen found little support among his colleagues, except from Sir Robert Peel, and to some extent from Mr. Goulburn. The Duke himself clung to his Turkish sympathies, and Lord Bathurst, Lord Ellenborough, and others were still more firmly wedded to their original predilections. After much discussion, the independent sovereignty was conceded to Lord Aberdeen ; but he could not gain the assent of the Cabinet to any extension of the limits of Greece beyond those already determined. With his accustomed loyalty to his chief and to his colleagues, he strove, in all his correspondence, to make the best of an arrangement he did not really like. To his brother alone he permitted himself to express the whole extent of his views with regard to the future which lay before the new State. In his judgment, however, the exact limits of the Greek kingdom had now become of far less importance than the choice of an efficient sovereign for it. He thought it essential that he should be a man of real capacity, willing to work and competent to rule ; one on whom would naturally devolve—or who, in case of need, might seize—the inheritance of the Sultan.

Among the numerous princes who were either candidates for the new sovereignty, or had been urged to become so, there were two — Prince Frederick of Orange and Prince Philip of Hesse—who appeared to Lord Aberdeen to combine the qualities required for the post. Both were men of ability, decision, and strength of character. But of these, Prince Frederick declined to allow himself to

be nominated, and the French Court refused to permit the appointment of a prince who was also a general in the Austrian army, which was the position of Prince Philip. It was therefore necessary to make a selection among other competitors. Prince John of Saxony was the candidate preferred by France, while the claims of Prince Charles of Mecklenburg were urged by Prussia. The Archdukes Maximilian and Bernard of Tuscany, who were not indisposed to undertake the task, were amiable and cultivated men, but fitter, in Lord Aberdeen's opinion, to criticise Greek architecture and collect Greek coins than to rule a turbulent and hungry crowd of modern Greeks. Prince Emilius of Hesse, though not without some of the recommendations of his cousin Philip, had too much of the stiffness of a military pedant to be suitable for the situation. Two other princes had proposed themselves as candidates, and eagerly pressed their respective claims: Prince Paul of Würtemberg and Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg. Prince Paul was a man of many gifts and restless ambition, but his unquestionable cleverness was tinged with eccentricity, and his aptness for intrigue inspired distrust. Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg was therefore accepted, to his own great satisfaction, by the Conference, rather as one to whom no Power could offer any definite objection than as in himself the best choice that could be made.

The shrewdness and diplomatic talents of the future King of the Belgians, Prince Leopold, were not then appreciated. It is probable that a belief in his indolence and indecision, which it was thought would ensure his being easily guided by the Russian minister who then presided over the Greek State, led to his being proposed by Russia. Capo d'Istrias had no wish to part with his own authority; and when he became aware, as he soon did, that the Prince

was a man of no ordinary capacity, he became as unwilling to submit to him as he had in the first instance been forward to name him. By playing on the indolence and self-indulgence of Prince Leopold's character, he knew how to frighten him into abdicating the dignity he had accepted. It was a misfortune. Had he, or either Prince Frederick of Orange or Prince Philip, assumed the reins of government, Greece would probably have played the part which Lord Aberdeen intended her to play, and which was much the same as that which Bulgaria has played in our own times. No successor to Prince Leopold had been selected before Lord Aberdeen left the Foreign Office. By Lord Palmerston it was determined that the sovereign of Greece should not be its ruler, but a constitutional king of the approved type, a figure-head, not a governor; and that, even during the time which must elapse before a constitution could be framed, he should rule through a council. Accordingly, the young Otho of Bavaria was chosen, and a council of regency, mainly composed of Germans, set up to rule in his name. It was an unfortunate choice. What Greece wanted was the direction of a single vigorous mind, the grasp of one firm hand. What it got was a divided council of timid and selfish pedants, acting in the name of a dull incompetent boy.

The space at my disposal warns me that I must not attempt to discuss at equal length the line taken by Lord Aberdeen with reference to the affairs of Portugal.

It had been arranged that a separation of the crowns of Portugal and Brazil should take place on the death of King John VI., and that his eldest son, Dom Pedro, should elect which of the two he would retain. He chose the Empire of Brazil, and resigned the crown of Portugal to his infant daughter. He at the same time granted a constitution to Portugal of a liberal character, but which wholly set aside

the existing and ancient Cortes. His sister, the Infanta Isabella, was in 1828 compelled by ill-health to resign the regency which had been conferred upon her, and by the Emperor's appointment the regency devolved upon his younger brother Dom Miguel. The position of Dom Miguel was peculiar. In the opinion of many Portuguese, and probably in his own, the crown had devolved on Dom Miguel on his father's death, Dom Pedro's assumption of a separate crown as Emperor of Brazil having invalidated his power to transmit the right of succession to that of Portugal. It was also contended that constitutional changes could not legally be effected without the consent of the Cortes, and that an Emperor of Brazil who had renounced the succession to the throne of Portugal in 1826 could not possibly nominate a regent of that country in 1828. Whether, therefore, in accepting the regency, and swearing as he did to maintain his niece's rights and uphold the Constitution, Dom Miguel acted honestly, may well be doubted; although it may be said in his favour that, if he was from the first insincere, he deceived so experienced and acute an observer as Prince Metternich, and that, even if he had gone to Portugal with the most sincere intention of being faithful to the young Queen and the Constitution, it is probable that any prince, unless he had been a man of far greater strength of mind than Dom Miguel possessed, would have found it difficult to resist the all but universal desire of the nation to seat him on the throne and restore the ancient constitution of Portugal. As to the unanimity of that wish no doubt can exist. It may be freely admitted that it was the offspring of folly and ignorance, but its reality cannot be questioned. The Constitutional Charter, and the new order of things, had no stronger partisan than the British Ambassador, Sir F. Lamb; yet his testimony,

which is above suspicion, is to the effect that Dom Miguel was 'incessantly assailed with recommendations to declare himself king, and reign without the Chambers.' 'It depends,' he wrote, 'entirely on his will to do so; the Chambers would offer no opposition, and the measure would be popular with the great majority of the country. . . . No party of any consequence appears to attach the least value to the Charter.'

The question really, therefore, was whether the success of a popular revolution, already effected, should be admitted, or the young Queen and the Constitution should be imposed on Portugal by British bayonets, and kept there by the support of British troops. Lord Aberdeen was decidedly of opinion that neither the interests of England nor of Portugal would be benefited by such a course, while by its adoption the constitution itself would be rendered odious to the people, as the badge of a foreign yoke. It is not easy to resist the argument contained in Lord Aberdeen's reply to M. de Barbacena, when called on by that minister to interfere actively on behalf of the young Queen. He says:

> It is then either for the purpose of resisting successful rebellion, or for that of deciding by force a question of doubtful succession, that Great Britain has now been called upon to act. But it is impossible to imagine that any independent State could ever intend thus to commit the direction and control of its internal affairs to the hands of another power; for doubtless if His Majesty be under the necessity of furnishing effectual succour in the event of any internal revolt or dissension in Portugal, it would become a duty, and indeed it would be essential, to take care that no such cause should exist if it could possibly be prevented. Hence a constant and minute interference in the affairs of Portugal would be indispensable, for His Majesty could never consent to hold his fleets and armies at the disposal of a king of Portugal without any of those due precautions, and that superintendence, which would assure him that his forces would not be liable to be employed in averting the effects of misgovernment, folly, or caprice. Is this a condition of things in which any State professing to be independent could endure to exist?

The demand of M. de Barbacena was echoed in the House of Lords by Lord Holland. To him Lord Aberdeen pointed out that it would be preposterous to suppose that the obligation undoubtedly incumbent on Great Britain to defend the House of Braganza from foreign invasion extended to the case of internal dissensions.

> It would (said he) be quite impossible to fulfil such engagements, if they had ever been entered into, which they had not. There would be no end to interference, if we were liable to be called on in every case of dispute between the members of that family or between the king and his people. . . . Whatever our wishes to see the establishment of liberal institutions, to enforce such institutions contrary to the will of the people would be to do that which could not be approved by the noble lord.

No one nowadays would consider it possible that Great Britain should conceive it her duty to aid the King of Portugal in the suppression of a popular revolt, in compliance with the provisions of an antiquated treaty made more than five hundred years ago; and it is difficult to understand how the Liberals of 1830 could be induced to depart so widely from their accustomed principles, only because such a departure would in this particular instance have been favourable to the cause with which they sympathised. Lord Aberdeen was unquestionably right in policy, and probably in fact also, in declining to admit that any obligation to intervene in the domestic affairs of Portugal was imposed by the treaty of 1370.

But if not obliged to do so by the provisions of a treaty, certainly no British interest called on England to interfere in a purely internal struggle, or to reverse by force the popular decision. Dom Miguel was in quiet and undisturbed possession, and according to the usual practice of recognising a *de facto* sovereign, would have been acknowledged by other States as king, had it not been for the

unusually odious circumstances of his usurpation. The strong sympathy of the English Government with the young Queen, the legitimacy of whose claims it recognised, was shown by this departure from the ordinary course, and by the suspension of diplomatic relations with Portugal. But having determined on the observance of strict neutrality, Lord Aberdeen was fully justified in saying, as he did in the House of Lords, that 'of all courses that might have been adopted, that which alone was perfectly indefensible was to lay down this principle in the first instance, and then depart from it whenever our opinions, feelings, or interests prompted us to do so.'

One exhibition of this neutrality was especially blamed by the Liberal party. This was the interception, by an English man-of-war, of troops sent by Dom Pedro's agents from Plymouth to Terceira in defiance of the King's proclamation and the provisions of the Foreign Enlistment Act, as well as those of international law. These troops had declared for Donna Maria at Oporto, but, receiving no support, had fled precipitately to Spain, which country they were ordered to quit within a month. On grounds of humanity the British Government interposed on their behalf; procured for them permission to prolong their stay in Spain, and promised them hospitality for a time in England, on their way to Brazil, whither they expressed their intention to repair. But after their arrival in England it appeared that it was the intention of those who directed the movements of these troops to send them not to Brazil but to the Azores. All these islands were under the rule of Dom Miguel, except the island of Terceira, which was divided, the population being in favour of Dom Miguel, and the garrison of the fortress having declared for Donna Maria. Dom Pedro's agent was informed that no hostile

expedition against any part of the Portuguese dominions could be permitted to start from England, but that prohibition was not the result of any special eagerness to defeat his objects ; and he was repeatedly told that if he would only take his troops to some other country, France or Brazil, and start thence on his expedition, its progress would not be interfered with, and its success or failure would become a matter of comparative indifference.

It was at last agreed that the troops should go to Brazil, but having by false clearances effected their departure, they set sail for Terceira. They had been told they would not be allowed to land there, and they were followed and prevented from doing so. The British Government, Lord Aberdeen maintained, had a right to prevent that being done by fraud which it was its duty to prevent being done openly. Had it not done so, it would have rendered itself liable to compensate Portuguese subjects for all injuries done to them by the expedition, and would have given the Portuguese Government a just cause for war, a course not the less unjustifiable because it was unlikely to be attended with that result.

According to the doctrines now generally accepted, the action taken by the English Government was that which, in the exercise of an honest neutrality, was incumbent on it. But, while on the one hand it refused to protect the sovereign, the legitimacy of whose claims it acknowledged, against the revolt of her subjects, or to impose a particular form of government on a people unwilling to receive it, the Spanish Court on the other was sternly forbidden to give any aid to the usurper. When British interests required such a course, Dom Miguel was addressed in language of undisguised menace. British subjects had been molested, and the rights secured to them by treaty disregarded, by the Portuguese

Government. In consequence of energetic representations made, Dom Miguel issued decrees confirming and assuring to foreign residents all privileges they had heretofore enjoyed. But this was by no means sufficient for the English Government, which observed that the decrees, however satisfactory in general, had no reference to the particular case of Marcos Ascoli, and that, if within three days the reparation demanded on his account were not given, measures would at once be taken to ensure the most ample redress.

Again, eighteen months later, the Portuguese Government was told that, unless the demands made on behalf of certain British vessels improperly detained by the Portuguese blockading squadron, were within three days complied with, an adequate force would be directed to the Azores, there to obtain redress for injuries already committed and effectively to prevent their recurrence.

But, however little sympathy might be felt by Lord Aberdeen for Dom Miguel and his cause, it was clear to all but the most prejudiced party opponents that, after he had occupied the throne of Portugal for more than two years without resistance, and was to all appearance permanently and peaceably established there, his recognition could not be long avoided. In 1830 the government of Dom Miguel was, and had been for two years past, the undisputed government *de facto* of Portugal; English interests were injured by the absence of an accredited English minister; and though abhorrence of Dom Miguel's character and conduct rendered the act distasteful, recognition of his position was sooner or later inevitable. There can be no question that, but for events in Brazil, which did not take place till after Lord Aberdeen had quitted the Foreign Office, and which set Dom Pedro free to return to Europe to fight in his daughter's

cause, the Government of Lord Grey would in the long run have equally felt obliged to acknowledge accomplished facts, and to recognise, however reluctantly, Dom Miguel as King of Portugal.

Another popular prejudice, wholly groundless, but which has left its traces on the traditions of liberalism, is, that the Duke of Wellington and Lord Aberdeen entertained a strong sympathy with the reactionary Government of France, and, if they did not advise, at least regarded without displeasure its attempts to recover autocratic power. No mistake could be greater. The public correspondence of Lord Aberdeen shows how clearly he saw the folly, and how decidedly he disapproved the violence, of the French Government; while his private letters prove that the Government of Charles X. was regarded by him from first to last with suspicion, distrust, and dislike. For some time, indeed, before the revolution of July 1830, a discussion with Prince Polignac had been in progress, which daily assumed a more threatening aspect, and which, but for that revolution, might not improbably have brought about a war between France and England.

In the latter part of 1829 rumours reached the English Government that France contemplated an expedition against Algiers, in which she was to be assisted by Mehemed Ali, Pasha of Egypt. The truth of these rumours was persistently denied, but in January 1830 Lord Aberdeen received copies of the despatches of the French Ambassador at Constantinople to his Government, which Prince Metternich had found means to intercept. These despatches afforded incontrovertible evidence not only that the French Government contemplated an expedition against Algiers, but also of its alliance with Mehemed Ali, who was to receive as his reward the Regencies of Tunis and Tripoli. The English

Ambassador at Paris, Lord Stuart de Rothesay, was instructed to make inquiries on the subject, and was told by Prince Polignac that the expedition was resolved on, and would enforce the demolition of the fortifications of Algiers and the abolition of piracy and slavery. But Prince Polignac at the same time explicitly denied any intention on the part of the French Government to form any colony, or place French garrisons, on any part of the African coast; and on a later day as distinctly assured Lord Stuart that he should

> not hesitate to declare the renunciation of any intention on the part of the French Government to obtain territory on the coast of Africa, because they had never contemplated such acquisition in undertaking this expedition.

But this was only stated in conversation, and no such express renunciation was to be found in the despatch which, after a long delay, was communicated by the French Ambassador to Lord Aberdeen. The demand for such an assurance was renewed in more and more pressing terms, and Prince Polignac was told that

> His Majesty's Government expect that His Most Christian Majesty should renounce any project of permanent conquest or aggrandisement; and that His Majesty should give some intimation of his intentions in the event of the entire subversion of the State of Algiers.

The promised explanations not being furnished, Lord Aberdeen, on the 4th of May, wrote in still more energetic language:

> The affair, in truth, begins to wear a sinister appearance, and to give rise to doubts and suspicions which it would be very far from the desire of His Majesty's Government to entertain. We have a duty to perform from which we cannot shrink. . . . If the projects of the French Cabinet be as pure and disinterested as is asserted by M. de Polignac, he can have no real difficulty in giving us the most entire satisfaction.

The anticipated communication was made a few days later; but it was received by Lord Aberdeen, as he

informed Lord Stuart, 'with astonishment and concern, for in it

the French Minister, after detailing at much length the nature and objects of the expedition, and complaining of the unreasonable expectations of His Majesty's Government, declines to give any further explanations or assurances in an official form.

Lord Stuart was instructed to draw the serious attention of Prince Polignac to the promises which had been made and the pledges repeatedly given, as well as to the manner in which it was now proposed that they should be redeemed, and the despatch closed with the significant hint that,

when you shall have reported the result of this appeal thus made to the consistency and good faith of M. de Polignac, it will be my duty humbly to take His Majesty's commands respecting such further instructions to Your Excellency as the occasion may seem to require.

While, however, Prince Polignac refused any official explanation, he continued, privately, to disclaim all intention of conquest; and on July 19 he told Lord Stuart that,

as to territorial possession, he intended to acknowledge the authority of the Porte, to negotiate with it exclusively for the possession of the small posts France claimed before the war, and to leave the Porte to make its own arrangements for securing its authority over the whole of the rest of the Regency.

Whether the French Government would have had the courage to carry out its professions—whether, indeed, it even intended to do so—may be doubtful. But it is clear that there would have been difficulty in evading the promises it had already made, and that a serious breach with Great Britain would have resulted from such a course. Ten days, however, after this conversation with Lord Stuart, not M. de Polignac alone, but the dynasty he served, was overthrown by the Revolution which drove Charles X. from France.

This catastrophe was little anticipated by Lord Stuart,

who, on July 23, the very day before the issue of the Ordinances, wrote:

> . . . The various reports respecting the possibility of a *coup d'état* I believe *to be utterly unfounded.*

On the receipt of intelligence of the issue of the Ordinances, unaccompanied as it at first appeared to be by any serious disturbance, Lord Stuart was at once instructed to deliver no opinion

> either to the French Government, to his colleagues, or to any other person, and to declare that this reserve is prescribed by the express instructions of his Government. This silence will sufficiently indicate the nature of the impression which has been produced upon the minds of His Majesty's Government by the recent decision of the Cabinet of the Tuileries.

In writing privately to Lord Stuart on the following day, Lord Aberdeen expressed his own opinion, that the question to be decided was, 'whether a monarchy under any form will be permitted to exist, or whether we shall again see a republic;' but mentioned the fact, which is a curious one, that, 'notwithstanding the astonishment, and even alarm, which prevail here, the effect on the funds has been but slight, the persuasion in the City being that a change of ministers will set all to rights.' It is impossible within these limits to describe in any detail the very interesting correspondence carried on with Lord Stuart during the progress of the Revolution; but I may mention one incident, not, I believe, generally known. On August 5, Lord Stuart wrote that King Charles X. had reason to believe that it was intended that the vessel on which he was to be embarked should convey him to the United States, and requested that two English vessels should be sent to Cherbourg to escort the royal family to Jersey, or wherever else they might determine to seek an asylum. Lord Aberdeen replied:

If, under pretence of allowing the King to go where he pleases he should be *kidnapped* and taken to America, it is clear that our interference to prevent it, to be effectual, must be forcible, and would therefore be a measure of war. Odious and detestable as such an act would be, we should not be justified in resenting it in this manner. If our interference should be merely officious, we shall clearly do injury to the King, and give evidence of hostility against the new Government, which it is most desirable at present to avoid. I confess that I am not disposed to believe in the intention ascribed to the French Government; but even if it were certain, our interference could not but be disadvantageous, and ought most assuredly not to be thought of.

Nor is it possible for us to take the responsibility of giving advice respecting the disposal of the Duke of Bordeaux. The situation of the King in this respect is the most difficult and cruel which can be imagined, but it is not foreign advice which can improve it.

The Duke of Wellington was at first disposed to abstain from any recognition of the Revolution until after the allies had been consulted, nor did he wholly reject the idea of subsequent intervention. Lord Aberdeen energetically combated these views during the first week in August, arguing that the case was not one foreseen by the treaties, and that the unconstitutional action of Charles X. had relieved the allies from all obligations to support him. And he further urged that, unless it was intended to engage in a war to which he would be no party, it was folly to throw away any chance of preserving peace; and that the recognition of Louis Philippe, if made at all, would be far more useful if made at once.

In a few days the Duke acquiesced.

I will immediately go to London (he wrote on the 12th August), and we can then decide whether we will act without assembling the Cabinet. There are some bitter pills to swallow. . . . However, the best chance of peace is to swallow them all. If we don't quarrel with them they must set these matters to rights, or quarrel among themselves, or quarrel with us. Any one of these would be better for us and for the world than that we should at this moment quarrel with them.

And on the 14th, after repeating his former opinion that he was 'quite certain that the case is one of revolution, and that we are bound by treaty to concert with our allies,' he added the admission that 'circumstances render it expedient for their interest, as well as our own, that we should act without that concert, and we must take that course.'

Louis Philippe was accordingly at once recognised as King of the French; and an elaborate despatch in explanation of this step was written by Lord Aberdeen, and sent to all the principal courts of Europe.

The decision not to interfere in the affairs of France, and to recognise the right of that country to effect a revolution very similar to that which had taken place in England in 1688, will not now be questioned; but that the unconstitutional action of Charles X. freed the allies from the obligations entered into by them at Aix-la-Chapelle is perhaps more open to dispute. This initial difficulty, however, being surmounted, and a policy of neutrality resolved on, the arguments urged in favour of the immediate recognition of Louis Philippe were incontestable.

The French Revolution was in a few weeks followed by an insurrection in Belgium, which bad management speedily converted into a revolution. Questions more difficult of solution than those involved in the recognition of the French Revolution were thus raised. Whatever might be said as to the inapplicability of the protocol of Aix-la-Chapelle to the existing state of things in France, it was impossible to deny that the obvious *prima facie* interpretation of existing engagements under the treaties of 1814 and 1815 bound England and her allies to maintain the integrity of the kingdom of the Netherlands, and to comply with the King's request for their armed intervention between himself and his revolted subjects. But the Duke of

Wellington and Lord Aberdeen were resolved not to adopt a course which would have rendered war with France all but inevitable, and were most anxious to engage the French Government in negotiations which would, at all events, prevent any open assistance being afforded to the Belgian insurgents from that quarter. In the pursuit of these objects they were most efficaciously aided by Talleyrand, who had been sent to London as French Ambassador by Louis Philippe; and it is not impossible, nor indeed improbable, that with his assistance means would have been found to maintain the link which bound together the provinces of the Netherlands, while giving effect to the just complaints of Belgium.

But Lord Aberdeen's share in the negotiations was brought to an abrupt close by the defeat of the Duke of Wellington's Government in the House of Commons, and its consequent resignation on November 16, 1830.

CHAPTER V

OPPOSITION—COLONIAL OFFICE: 1830–41

Reform Bill—Marriage of Lord Abercorn—Death of Lady Alice Gordon, of Lady Aberdeen, and of Lady Frances Gordon—Formation of Sir R. Peel's Government—Colonial Office—Mr. Gladstone—Canada—Opposition—Private Life—Opinions on Foreign Affairs—Again becomes Foreign Secretary.

In the preceding chapter I have dealt only with the business of the department over which Lord Aberdeen presided, and have made no allusion to the general conduct of the Government of which he was a member. In the ordinary administration of domestic affairs he took little part, and indeed felt but comparatively little interest. In the progress, however, of the two great measures of home policy which were carried through Parliament by the Duke of Wellington's Government, he had the warmest sympathy. The repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts was, of course, in entire accordance with his tolerant and liberal views, and he had long advocated the repeal of the disabilities under which Roman Catholics then laboured. He had not, like many of his colleagues, opinions on that subject to recant, or pledges to violate; and the conversion of the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel, if not exactly to the views he entertained, at all events to the practical course he desired to follow, gave him unmixed pleasure. He alone, I believe, of the Cabinet protested against the foolish step of invalidating the Clare election.

On the Reform question his views were moderate, and he was wholly unprepared for the declaration made by the Duke of Wellington on November 2, 1830. He has often said that, had the Duke spoken to him previously on the subject, he could have kept him from uttering the idolatrous eulogy he then pronounced on the unreformed Parliament. But when the Duke was on his legs he was wont, if he had to praise at all, to deal in superlatives, and to employ exaggerated language. Services which he commended were always ranked as among the most remarkable he had ever known; institutions he approved were apt to be described as faultless. When the Duke resumed his seat, he turned to Lord Aberdeen, who sat beside him, and said: 'I have not said too much, have I?' Lord Aberdeen put his chin forward, with a gesture habitual to him when much moved, and only replied: '*You'll hear of it!*' After leaving the House he was asked what the Duke had said. 'He said that we were going out,' was the reply. From that moment Lord Aberdeen considered the doom of the Cabinet sealed. It fell a fortnight later, November 16, 1830.

With the new Government the question of Reform took precedence of all others, and on this question Lord Aberdeen, while not caring to dissociate himself from his party, was in but imperfect sympathy with it. He never forgot, and often repeated, that Mr. Pitt had remained until his death convinced of the expediency of considerable reforms in the system of parliamentary representation, and that, though the scheme was laid aside for the time as unsuitable for discussion during the course of a great war, it was not abandoned, but only deferred to some later period of the career which the still young minister, unconscious of his approaching death, fancied yet lay before him. In the abstract Lord Aberdeen was not unfavourable to reform, but

this did not lead him to desire so complete a revolution in the balance of the Constitution as was involved in the provisions of Lord John Russell's Reform Bill. He believed, and rightly believed, that it would destroy the existing aristocratic constitution, and this he regarded as in itself an evil. He did not, on the one hand, share the delusion of Lord Grey, that the influence of the House of Lords would be little impaired, and that, though abuses would be abolished, affairs would continue with little alteration in the old groove. Nor, on the other hand, did he hold, with the Radicals, that the destruction of the old aristocratic influence would be beneficial to the nation. But he saw that the omission to make moderate reforms, which, if effected before the French Revolution of 1830, might have rendered further changes for some time unnecessary, had now made a very large measure of reform unavoidable. Entertaining as he did the opinion that such a measure, however inevitable, would be attended by unfortunate consequences, he considered that the House of Lords should in the first instance reject the Bill as a solemn protest against its tendency, but that when brought up again it should accept the measure and face its consequences. Among those consequences the House must be prepared to admit that henceforth its duties would be only those of checking and revising decisions which it would no longer be able to reverse.

That under the present condition of affairs this is the true function of the House of Lords is now generally admitted, but this was recognised by few in 1831. Lord Aberdeen's view, that the Bill should be protested against but passed, was ridiculed and scoffed at by Whigs, Tories and Radicals with equal impartiality. Lord Grey was unable to see how greatly the balance of the old Constitution was destroyed, and in his correspondence with Madame de

Lieven sneered at what seemed to him Lord Aberdeen's strange notions. The Tories saw in the suggestion of ultimate acquiescence a cowardly abandonment of the coequal right of the Lords to reject any measure of the Commons of which they disapproved; and the Radicals exclaimed at the apparent absurdity of any man opposing, in the first instance, a measure which he was prepared ultimately to allow to pass. With characteristic indifference he took no trouble to explain, except to very few, the grounds of his opinion. When, however, in 1832, on the resignation of Lord Grey in consequence of a check in the progress of the Reform Bill, the Duke of Wellington attempted to form a Government, and asked Lord Aberdeen to resume his place at the Foreign Office, there was no obstacle on principle to his acceptance of the invitation, although he from the first predicted that success in such an attempt was at the moment altogether impossible.

The Duke of Wellington's attempt to form a Government ended disastrously in less than a week, and having consented to form part of a Government which was to have accepted the Reform Bill, it appeared to Lord Aberdeen inconsistent to oppose the further progress of the measure. He consequently retired to Scotland. There the Reform Bill effected an even more complete revolution of the electoral system than in England. Up to that time none but landed proprietors had votes at the election of county members in Scotland, while the borough members were returned by the town councils. A thoroughly popular franchise was now substituted. Lord Aberdeen's supremacy in Aberdeenshire was not, however, disturbed by the new electorate, and his brother Captain William Gordon, who had represented the county since 1818, under the old system, was on the dissolution re-elected to the first

Reformed Parliament by a great majority. On October 25th, Lord and Lady Aberdeen were present at Gordon Castle, at the marriage of Lord Abercorn to Lady Louisa Russell, daughter of the Duke of Bedford. Lord Abercorn had just attained his majority, and this marriage gave both Lord and Lady Aberdeen the liveliest pleasure. It was the commencement of a happy union of more than fifty years' duration. But this was only a bright gleam amid the anxieties and sorrows of Lord Aberdeen's domestic life, as to which, since his acceptance of office in 1828, we have been silent, and to which we must now return.

In 1827 an improvement seemed to have taken place in Lady Alice's health, and hopes were entertained that she might outgrow her constitutional delicacy. But in 1828 she grew worse, and the end evidently approached. Every spare moment of Lord Aberdeen's time was passed with her: his first inquiry and first visit on returning from the House of Lords or from the Foreign Office were for her. All that skill could do was done, but in vain, and on April 29, 1829, at the age of twenty, she passed away in his arms, where for hours previously she had lain. For some days afterwards he shut himself up at the Foreign Office absolutely alone.

The unintermitting anxiety which, during the last ten years, had been his chief preoccupation was now over. None of the children of his Catherine now remained alive. One by one they had faded before his eyes, through long periods of pain and suffering. 'I have known many sorrows,' he wrote in his solitude; but from those sorrows he sought to draw their true lesson. About this time Uvedale Price wrote thus to Rogers:

I shall never forget my having seen, some twenty years ago, a number of children coming out of a house in Grosvenor

Square. I was so struck by their beauty that, when they had passed by me, I went up to the porter, who, with the door half open, was following them with his eyes, and asked him whose children they were. 'Lord Aberdeen's,' he answered, 'and there is not a finer family in all Britain.' I soon afterwards became acquainted with Lord Aberdeen, and soon very intimate; was continually at the Priory, and saw these beautiful and amiable children growing up in all their loveliness; but mixed with the colour of youth and beauty was that of disease, with the 'terrific glory' of Homer's Sirius.

> *Λαμπρότατος μὲν ὅδ' ἐστι, κακὸν δέ τε σῆμα τέτυκται,*
> *Καί τε φέρει πολλὸν πυρετὸν δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν.*

Not long after Lord Abercorn's marriage, the health of Lady Aberdeen began to fail, and after a very long and painful illness she expired at Argyll House on August 26, 1833. She was truly and long lamented, and her loss cast an additional shade of gloom over the remaining years of an already overclouded life. In the same year which had seen Lady Alice's death, Lady Aberdeen's youngest son was born. To him Lord Aberdeen at once transferred something of the love he had borne his lost daughter. The child was a sickly infant, and on Lady Aberdeen's death, as the youngest, frailest, and most helpless of her children, became the object of his tenderest and most constant solicitude.

In the spring which succeeded Lady Aberdeen's death she was followed to the grave by her only daughter, Lady Frances, in her sixteenth year. The loss of this, his last remaining daughter, was a new wound to Lord Aberdeen. On hearing of it, his old and intimate friend, Madame de Lieven, proposed to come down to stay with him at the Priory, where he then was. He wrote to thank her, but told her that if she came she would not find him, as he was going at once to a distant part of the country. 'You must not think me churlish or insensible if I shun even your

society at this moment. There are some misfortunes which are too great for speech.'

Lord Aberdeen spent the greater part of the summer and autumn at Haddo, keeping up a constant correspondence with the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, Madame de Lieven, and others, but chiefly occupied by the improvement of his estate and the development of his park and pleasure-grounds. These were no longer the dreary waste which thirty years earlier they had been. Plantations were everywhere assuming the character of woods; a stately avenue, a mile in length, stretched from the house to a hill in the deer park. A large lake had taken the place of a morass. Roads intersected the grounds in every direction, and the flower-beds and terraces were bright with colour. In the house itself much had been done in the way of addition and alteration, which now rendered it, if not a first-class house, at least a very habitable one. On the estates, evidences of the improvements which had been prosecuted with untiring vigour for thirty years were on all sides to be seen. The ruinous 'farm-town' of 1800 had been replaced on almost every one of the nine hundred farms by a comfortable and substantial, if remarkably ugly house and farm buildings of granite. But, much as had been done, there were still mosses to drain and wastes to plant, and much other work yet to do. From these pursuits Lord Aberdeen was summoned in the middle of November 1834 by a most characteristic letter from the Duke of Wellington, calling him to his assistance in London. The Duke told him of the king's *coup d'état*, and that the Government had 'gone out sulkily,' but that he 'had been very cool and quiet, and engaged to keep things very cool and quiet,' till Peel's return.

The Duke was desirous that Lord Aberdeen should

resume his place at the Foreign Office, his own assumption of that post being, he thought, objectionable on account of his deafness. But this obstacle was overruled.

The Duke (wrote Lord Aberdeen to Madame de Lieven) is at the Foreign Office, having been urged, by me certainly more strongly than by any one, to go there. His own wish was that I should have resumed the situation ; but I could not be blind to the superior weight of his name and influence. I had intended to decline for myself any other laborious office, and was to have been President of the Council, which would have enabled me to give the greater part of my time to foreign affairs. I was, however, first persuaded to accept the Admiralty; and since that time I have, though much against my inclination, been appointed Secretary of State for the Colonies.

This office was highly distasteful to him, and it was with sincere relief that he relinquished its uncongenial duties on the overthrow of Sir Robert Peel's short Administration in the spring of 1835. His dislike of the post was due chiefly to two causes—the amount of patronage which then belonged to it, the distribution of which was to him odious ; and the existence in almost every colony of what he recognised as true and well-founded grievances, which were nevertheless so mixed up with faction and unreasonable pretensions as to render their redress a work of the utmost embarrassment and difficulty. Everywhere he found agitation and discontent. 'As a lover of your country' (he wrote to his old friend Gurney) 'you will be glad to hear that *Heligoland* is quiet and contented. This it is something to be able to say, for of no other colony can it be said.'

In after years Lord Aberdeen was accustomed to say that the irksomeness of the Colonial Office was accompanied by but one compensation—that which was to be found in the pleasure which he derived from the constant society and companionship of Sir James Stephen, then Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies,

in whose conversation Lord Aberdeen found a peculiar charm.

But his intercourse with his Political Under Secretary also was destined to become the foundation of a lifelong friendship, for it was in that capacity that he first made acquaintance with Mr. Gladstone.

In the same letter to Mr. Gurney from which I have already quoted, Lord Aberdeen says :—

> In consequence of the defeat of my Under Secretary in the county of Forfar, I have been obliged to appoint another. I have chosen a young man whom I did not know, and whom I never saw, but of whose good character and abilities I had often heard. He is the young Gladstone, and I hope he will do well. He has no easy part to play in the House of Commons, but it is a fine opening for a young man of talent and ambition, and places him in the way to the highest distinction. He appears to be so amiable that personally I am sure I shall like him.

Mr. Gladstone himself thus describes their first interview :

> On an evening in the month of January 1835 I was sent for by Sir Robert Peel, and received from him the offer, which I accepted, of the Under Secretaryship for the Colonies. From him I went on to your father, who was thus to be, in official home-talk, my master. Without any apprehension of hurting you, I may confess that I went in fear and trembling. I knew Lord Aberdeen only by public rumour. Distinction of itself naturally and properly rather alarms the young. I had heard of his high character ; but I had also heard of him as a man of cold manners, and close and even haughty reserve. It was dusk when I entered his room—the one on the first floor, with the bow-window looking to the Park—so that I saw his figure rather than his countenance. I do not recollect the matter of the conversation ; but I well remember that, before I had been three minutes with him, all my apprehensions had melted away like snow in the sun ; and I came away from that interview, conscious indeed—as who could fail to be conscious?—of his dignity, but of a dignity so tempered by a peculiar purity and gentleness, and so associated with impressions of his kindness, and even friendship, that I believe I thought more about the wonder of his being at that time so misunderstood by the outer world, than about the new duties and responsibilities of my new office.

'Misunderstood' he most unquestionably was, and that to a degree which is truly surprising, making every allowance for party misrepresentations and the unfavourable impression produced by his own reserve and seclusion. On the assembling of Parliament in 1835, Lord Howick vehemently assailed the Duke of Wellington and Lord Aberdeen as the leaders of the new Government in the House of Lords, and denounced the latter as a man whose principles made him an enemy of the human race! Three years later, in 1838, Lord Howick very handsomely admitted that such terms had been undeserved, and that, on returning to office, he had found (no doubt to his surprise) that, both in what he had written and what he had done, Lord Aberdeen's short administration of the Colonial Office was marked by thorough liberality. In later years no one more highly appreciated Lord Aberdeen than Lord Grey (as Lord Howick had then become). But in 1838 Lord Howick did not know, and I doubt whether he is to this day aware, that, had it not been for the speech to which I have referred, it was to *him* that Lord Aberdeen had resolved to offer the conduct of the measures to be taken for the conciliation of the Canadian people. Lord Aberdeen, indeed, still wished to make the offer, even after the denunciation in question, but on this Sir Robert Peel placed his veto. Lord Howick, he said, could not now accept the proposal, and might therefore affect to doubt the sincerity with which it had been made; while the offer itself would, in the circumstances, be hardly compatible with the consideration due to the Duke of Wellington, or indeed with self-respect on the part of Lord Aberdeen.

Short, however, as was his tenure of the office, and much as he disliked its duties, Lord Aberdeen, while Secretary of

State for the Colonies, contrived to take some steps of considerable importance. His instructions to Lord Amherst, whom he had intended to send as High Commissioner to Canada, with full powers not only to investigate but to settle on the most liberal principles the grievances of the colony, were considered by him one of his best compositions, and were certainly full of wisdom and justice. The intention was not carried into effect by his successor.

Lord Aberdeen had given a silent vote against the Reform Bill, and took no active part in the agitating discussions on domestic affairs which occurred in the two first short Parliaments of William IV. But he criticised severely the conduct of foreign affairs by Lord Grey's Government, which was already marked in some degree by Lord Palmerston's influence, and the peculiar characteristics of his policy. On again finding himself in opposition, after the fall of Sir Robert Peel's Government, Lord Aberdeen continued these criticisms, and again steadily opposed the principle, which he deemed a vicious one, on which that policy was based,—the principle, justified by Lord Palmerston (to use his own words), of 'intermeddling, and intermeddling in every way and to every extent short of actual military force,'[1] in the affairs of other countries, under the impression that by so doing he increased the influence of England. Lord Aberdeen, on the other hand, held that the influence of England was really diminished by such a course, and that morality forbade interference at all where we were not prepared to face its legitimate results. He deemed such interference inexpedient, because English diplomatic agents on the Continent were not likely, in his opinion, to be better qualified to interfere in the domestic

[1] Speech in the House of Commons, June 1, 1829.

affairs of other states than foreign agents were in our own; because such interference was sure to make England hated, even by those on whose behalf she intervened, and scorned by those who saw that her blustering language, if firmly met, was followed by no serious action; and because, whatever our sympathies, it was only for the defence or furtherance of English interests that it became a duty to interfere. It was, of course, easy to denounce Lord Aberdeen as a sympathiser with despotism, for naturally it was against despotic powers that the bravado of meddling was most displayed; that he was not so, it would be easy enough to prove.

But however decidedly opposed to Lord Palmerston's mode of conducting foreign affairs, Lord Aberdeen had no strong antagonism to the Government of Lord Melbourne, between many of the members of which and himself there existed ties of personal friendship or family connection. Nor was he at all eager, either on public or personal grounds, to hasten the overthrow of the Whig Government.

As I have before observed, he found great difficulty in being a partisan. He felt that there was little or no essential difference between the Whig noblemen and gentlemen who were in office, and the Tory noblemen and gentlemen who looked to succeed them. Nor could he attribute overwhelming importance to measures as to the wisdom of which opinions might indeed differ, but which were not revolutionary, and which would make no vital change in the condition of the country. It was consequently difficult to persuade him to remain in London during the latter part of the session. On one occasion the Duke of Wellington, who looked more seriously at the situation, had urged Lord Aberdeen to postpone his departure for Scotland, on the ground that there were many important

measures coming up from the House of Commons to which the House of Lords must give their attention, and on which they must decide. On Lord Aberdeen demurring to do so, and expressing an opinion that, except in very special cases, the Lords should not interfere with Bills the Commons had passed, the Duke lost patience, and rejoined :

> I think that men must now open their eyes, and see that if they don't act together, and make an effort to preserve property and rights from further invasion, they must all and each of them in his turn become a sacrifice to the new principles and course of action. I wish the House of Lords, if possible, to prevent the enactment of fresh mischief in this session of Parliament; or that, if such must be enacted, men's minds should be awakened to the contemplation of it through the discussion of the measures in contemplation. Possibly I am wrong. All this trouble and these efforts may be useless, nay, more, injurious. It may be best to let the country go to the devil its own way, or according to the guidance of the Government, the Political Unions, the Chartists! With all my heart! Be it so; I will not desire anybody to stay! I have before stood, and I can now stand, alone; and, please God, as long as I have strength and voice, they shall hear of the mischief which they have done and are doing.

Lord Aberdeen did not share these exaggerated apprehensions, and was, morever, confident that were the Whig Government inclined to adopt dangerous measures, which he did not believe, the Conservative party was too strong to render any indulgence of such tendencies possible. He wrote to Madame de Lieven in 1838 that, on public grounds,

> I and *one* of my friends[1] are perfectly satisfied to remain out of office, fully possessed of the means of preventing all legislative mischief, and able to expose any weakness or misconduct of the Government. We can wait without any sacrifice, but our eager friends are not easily to be repressed. They do not understand these cool speculations, and think that nothing is gained so long as a Whig Ministry is in office.

After the death of Lady Aberdeen he went little into general society. His appearance there was regarded with

[1] Peel.

respect and curiosity, but he was never a familiar figure in the eyes of the public, or in London drawing-rooms. Towards the end of 1838 Madame de Lieven had written to him that she sought relief from the contemplation of her own sorrows in the bustle and interest of political life. He replied:

> With your great talents and acquirements you can never be without resources; but in one respect I confess that we greatly differ. You look for interest and amusement in the agitation of the world and the spectacle it affords; now I cannot express to you my distaste for everything of the kind. This is not from a tendency to become gloomy and morose, for the contrary is the fact; but I have had enough of the world, and without any extravagance, would willingly have as little to do with it as is decent.

The great possessions and personal popularity of the Duke of Buccleuch rendered him the natural head of the Scotch Conservatives. In 1838 he was compelled by illness to leave England for a considerable time; and Lord Aberdeen was urged by the Duke of Wellington to assume the leadership and management of the Conservative party in Scotland. Lord Aberdeen declined to do so, alleging that neither his habits nor his character were suited to the duties of such a post, which ought to be filled by a man of more popular address, to whom general society was less distasteful and party politics more interesting. The Duke replied that he had written to Sir Robert Peel to join with him in overcoming Lord Aberdeen's resistance, and added:

> I close my answer to your letter of the 5th with this observation, which I beg you to reflect on. You went to the Colonial Office disliking it and its business, and everything connected with it. You see how well you succeeded in it, and that you are now the standard of our Colonial policy, as you were before of our foreign policy. This was done in a few months. The conclusion which I wish you to draw is this, that you have only to give your attention to any subject or any business, however irksome or disagreeable to you, to do it better than others, and you will master it as easily as you did the affairs of the Colonial Department.

Lord Aberdeen yielded to the solicitations of his two friends, but it was with reluctance. Haddo House had become as dear as it was once detested. He was always impatient to get there from London, and always left it with reluctance and regret. It was now his home, and he was never so well content as when there, in the midst of *cette grande existence féodale*, which so struck M. Guizot when some years later he visited Haddo.

His elder sons were now growing up to manhood. Lord Haddo had made a successful start at Cambridge, and in his first year at the University gained some distinction, greatly to Lord Aberdeen's delight, who wrote that it had brought tears to his eyes, but that they were tears of joy. Lord Haddo did not, however, continue the pursuit of academical honours, and was abroad, on a prolonged tour in Italy and Greece, when in 1837 he attained the age of twenty-one. Lord Haddo's majority was made the occasion of a great manifestation, and Lord Aberdeen entertained at dinner nearly a thousand of his tenants. In 1840 Lord Haddo married, and when he brought home his bride the tenants, who to the number of 700 or 800 had escorted their carriage on horseback from the Lodge, in their turn invited Lord Aberdeen and the newly married pair to a dinner presided over by one of their own body. At this dinner Lord Aberdeen, with Lady Haddo on his arm, walked past the long rows at each table as though inspecting a regiment, and then in a few simple and very touching words presented her to them as the wife of their future landlord, and the successor of those 'whom she might equal but could not surpass.' He was from the first greatly captivated with his daughter-in-law, and till his death their mutual affection grew ever closer.

The first time I ever saw him (writes Lady Aberdeen) was at a garden-party given by Lady Mansfield at Caen Wood. Somebody pointed him out to me, and said, 'You might take him for a Methodist parson.' Certainly he was dressed in black, and looked very grave and sad, but somehow his countenance impressed me in a remarkable way, so much so that I have still a perfectly distinct recollection of his appearance on that day. The next occasion was at the time of Harriet's marriage, and after that I do not remember seeing him again till just before my own. Naturally I felt some trepidation at meeting him then, but his gentle kindness and the calm affectionate tone of the little he said to me helped to reassure me, and when I was told that in answer to Mademoiselle d'Este's praises of my younger sister he had said, 'I like *my own* best, however,' my surprise and gratitude were very great: I think I was never really afraid of him after that. Then came our arrival at Haddo, and the words he spoke that day. All the time that we were there he seemed to take pains to become acquainted with me and to make me feel that he looked on me as a daughter; though it was, of course, only gradually that the relation of father and daughter between us became as true (and I do think it did) as if I had been his own child.

In 1839, had Sir Robert Peel succeeded in the attempt to form a Government, Lord Aberdeen would have returned to the Foreign Office. During the next two years his attention was very largely engaged by the affairs of the Church of Scotland; but it was in foreign affairs that he was always chiefly interested, and to them the greater part of his time was devoted.

Unlike many of his friends, he approved the policy of the Whig Government in regard to Egypt and Syria. A few extracts from letters to Madame de Lieven will show the views he entertained on this subject, and the readiness he felt to do justice to his rival where he believed him to be essentially in the right:

Aug. 14, 1840.—I rather think that Lord Palmerston will be able to make out a good case in justification of the course he has adopted, although I perceive that some of my friends are of a different opinion. Notwithstanding all the warlike demonstrations which have taken place, I cannot feel much

alarm. I have always told you that my reliance is on the wisdom of the King. It is impossible that he should permit the personal feelings of M. Thiers or the national vanity of his people to precipitate him into a position so dangerous to the existence of his dynasty as a war with the great Powers of Europe, and for no real French objects or essential interests. This is quite incredible. If the four Powers are united they have nothing to fear from the ill-humour of France in a question of this kind, nor is there any danger of the French people undertaking a crusade against all Europe in support of such a barbarian as the Pasha of Egypt.

Aug. 31.—I retain my former opinions, and am persuaded that your apprehensions are unfounded. It is true that M. Thiers blusters mightily, and is very warlike, but unfortunately he can get nobody to believe him. Throughout Europe the peace establishment is everywhere preserved; and although the French were a little sensitive at first, even they have recovered their equilibrium. All this arises from the absurdity of supposing it possible that France should go to war against the great Powers of Europe without any shadow of a justifiable cause. . . . You say that the national vanity is deeply wounded, and that all parties are agreed. You think, therefore, that the King would not be able, and is not inclined, to control public feeling. Now I still place great confidence in the King. The national vanity and self-love may be excited, and the King may find it necessary to sail with the current, but he will know how to vary his course in good time. He will never expose the safety of his country and his family in a quarrel so preposterous. . . . . There appears to be a general notion that we have been guilty of some want of respect, and that the affair has been mismanaged, and France needlessly affronted; but I confess that I have as yet seen no evidence whatever of this being the case.

Nov. 3.—You may easily believe with what impatience we wait to see the proceedings of the Chambers at their meeting on the 5th, deciding as they will the fate of this country and of the world with respect to peace or war. I confess that I am very sanguine about the pacific character of their conduct, not that I have any profound respect for the wisdom of the French Chambers, but France has really no case at all to justify the burning of an ounce of gunpowder. All these warlike demonstrations have been regarded with astonishment. M. Guizot is a lover of peace, and although he may think there is ground of complaint on the part of the French Government, he knows perfectly well that there is no hostile intention in the Treaty of July 15, nor anything which can possibly justify extreme measures. I am sure that this opinion must be shared by the reflecting portion of the French people, who must see the

extreme danger of provoking war under such circumstances. France, with a just cause, and her real national interests at stake, is equal in power to all Europe united; but France, with the ridiculous *casus belli* created by the Radical journals, would find herself no match for the other Powers.

Dec. 12.—I regret to see that efforts are still made, and not without success, to persuade the French people that they have been insulted by the four Powers, notwithstanding the absurdity of such an assertion. I entirely agree with M. de Lamartine, that the only insult offered to France has been the complete indifference of the Powers to all her warlike preparations, and that none of them have increased their force, or incurred any additional expense. But this insult was in fact a compliment, in so far that it gave credit to the French people for sufficient common sense to see the unreasonable nature of the course adopted.

But if he approved of the Syrian expedition, he as decidedly censured the coldness with which, after the fall of M. Thiers, the overtures of M. Guizot for a better understanding with England were received.

Lord Aberdeen also disapproved strongly of the dissolution of 1841. Fully aware as the ministers were of the hopelessness of their appeal to the country, he considered the step hardly constitutional, and decidedly unfair towards the Queen, whose prerogative was thus exercised. Personally he was grateful for a decision which enabled him to spend the best part of the summer at Haddo; and when, after the elections, he left it with the knowledge that the fall of the Government was inevitable, and that in the course of a few days he would be called on to take part in the formation of another, it was with bitter regret that he reflected that years might pass before he would be at home again for any lengthened stay. Lord Aberdeen received the seals of the Foreign Department for the second time on September 3, 1841.

CHAPTER VI

SCOTCH CHURCH AFFAIRS

Constitution of the Scottish Church—The Veto Act—Mr. Whyte's Case—Negotiation with Church Leaders—Introduction of Lord Aberdeen's Bill—Attitude of the Government and of the General Assembly—Bill withdrawn—Fresh Negotiations—Their Failure at the moment of success—Attitude of Parties in 1842-43—The Great Secession—Lord Aberdeen's Act adopted.

THE ignorance of even well-informed people in the southern part of Great Britain as to Scottish affairs was, at the beginning of the century, almost total, and even half a century ago was surprisingly great. Since that time it has probably diminished, but it cannot be denied that it is still considerable. That a Presbyterian Church is established in Scotland, and that Scotland has preserved its own system of civil and criminal jurisprudence, are facts generally known ; but how the one is governed and the other administered, or in what relation they mutually stand, are matters which most fairly well-informed Englishmen would find it difficult to explain. A few prefatory words are therefore requisite if this chapter is to be rendered intelligible to the ordinary English reader : attractive, I fear, I cannot hope to make it.

The deliberative assemblies of the Church of England were reduced to silence and inaction early in the eighteenth century, but the Church of the sister kingdom retained unimpaired in vigorous life and activity, the organisation

which gave it in many respects practical independence of the State. Every parish had its Kirk Session of minister and lay elders, by which the affairs of the parish were regulated, and which administered spiritual discipline in the way of excommunication and penance with a vigour and promptitude which might be envied, but could not be imitated, by the clergy of the southern part of Great Britain. The Presbytery of the bounds, consisting of all the clergy of a district of moderate size, conferred ordination and exercised other quasi-Episcopal functions; while the Synod, a body whose functions were chiefly deliberative, was composed of the united Presbyteries of a large area, the boundaries of which, speaking roughly, pretty nearly coincided with those of the ancient dioceses of the Scottish Church. Above all these was the General Assembly, composed of elected clerical and lay members from every Presbytery, which met annually for a few days in the month of May.

The beginning of the present reign found the Established Church of Scotland, which then comprised an overwhelming majority of its population, divided by conflicting opinions on the subject of the method to be observed in the admission of ministers to parochial charges. These differences were reflected in the General Assembly of the Church, in which those styled Non-Intrusionists were the stronger party. At the accession of William IV., seven years earlier, the law of the Church with regard to the settlement of the parochial clergy stood as it had stood unaltered for more than a century. Under it, three distinct rights were understood to be recognised: that of a patron to present to a living; that of any member of the congregation to object to such presentation; and that of the Church Courts to determine the validity of such objection. But the

'call' which the presentee was expected to receive from his future parishioners had become as hollow a form as the election of a bishop by an English chapter; and the right of objection had practically fallen into such desuetude that many doubted its existence, and maintained that it had been abolished by the Act of 1712, which restored the right of presentation to a single patron.

The Church of Scotland, however, did not escape the influence of the Reform movement, and in 1832 limitations on the right of patronage were suggested in the General Assembly; but any idea of thereby giving a veto on its exercise to the majority of the parishioners was expressly and studiously disclaimed. But in the following year the grant of such a veto was proposed on the motion of Dr. Chalmers, the most eminent member of the Assembly, and rejected by only a small majority: in the session of 1834 it was adopted. This regulation of the Assembly, known as the Veto Act, was regarded with very different eyes by the various sections of the majority which adopted it. Some regarded it as a mere measure of expediency; by others it was looked on as the fulfilment of a Scriptural obligation. Some considered it merely a declaration and definition of the existing law. Others admitted its novelty, but insisted on the inherent right of the Church to legislate with regard to all that concerned the induction of its ministers. Dr. Chalmers himself had, from the first, doubts as to the legality of the measure, which he afterwards on one occasion designated as 'a great blunder.' Lord Aberdeen, while not free from doubts as to the legality of the Assembly's action, was disposed to think that it might be covered by an unrepealed section of the Scotch Act of 1690; and that, at all events, some right of objection, cognisable by the Church Courts, was inherent in the

congregation. So long as the discussion was confined to the purely practical point of discovering the best means of effecting that which nearly all desired—the non-intrusion on a parish of a minister unacceptable to it—the question was in the main one of expediency; but the intervention of the Civil Courts raised questions of principle as to the limits of civil and ecclesiastical authority, which, if fought out to an absolute conclusion, were certain to rend the Established Church asunder, as in the end they did. Such differences had existed from the foundation of the Scottish establishment, and had been only kept from mischievous action by the most cautious handling.

Some months after the passage of the Veto Act, a presentation made by Lord Kinnoull having been vetoed by the congregation, the patron and presentee appealed to the Court of Session, and obtained from it a decree which set aside the veto as *ultra vires*. This decree was confirmed on appeal (but not till 1838), by the unanimous judgment of the House of Lords. That judgment left untouched the powers of the Presbytery as to ultimate rejection, but ruled that it was bound to admit the presentee to what are styled his trials. The judgments then delivered convinced Lord Aberdeen of the illegality of the veto, but did not destroy his inclination to legalise it. 'I certainly had some misgivings,' he wrote, 'about the Auchterarder case; but I am now satisfied that the law has been correctly laid down and applied. Whether the existing law can continue without alteration is another question.'

While matters were in this state the practical working of the veto was unexpectedly brought home to Lord Aberdeen in a forcible shape at his own door. The Rev. Ludovick Grant, who had been minister of the parish of Methlic

for more than fifty years, died in the spring of 1839, and it became Lord Aberdeen's duty, as patron, to nominate his successor. After long and careful inquiry into the qualifications of different candidates, his choice fell on Mr. James Whyte, a gentleman of whose ability, activity, and successful work he had received most satisfactory evidence. Indeed, his possession of these qualifications was not questioned; but a report was circulated in the parish that Mr. Whyte had, at an earlier period of his career, been guilty of immoral conduct. This report induced a large number of the parishioners to protest against the appointment. Lord Aberdeen, to quote his own words,

> wrote immediately to the Presbytery, and desired the strictest inquiry to be made—and in the most public manner—with the view of satisfying the parish. It took place accordingly in the Church of Methlic, and lasted fifteen or sixteen hours. The result was that the accusation was completely disproved, not only to the entire satisfaction of the Presbytery, but to that of the agent of the accusing parties, who declared his constituents as well as himself to be perfectly convinced of the utter groundlessness of the charge.

Lord Aberdeen very naturally 'thought the affair was at an end; but Scotch farmers are hard to convince, and slow to abandon any impression they have once formed; and, notwithstanding the trial by the Presbytery, the people still imagined there might be some truth in the accusation,' and on that ground continued to object. What followed will be best described in Lord Aberdeen's own words, as contained in letters to the Dean of Faculty:

> *Sept.* 5.—I had a meeting the other day with about a hundred of the heads of families. They were very civil and very respectful, but very obstinate. They declared over and over again that they had no other objection to the presentee than the existence of this *fama*, but that such being the case, and the accusation not disproved to their satisfaction, he could never be a useful minister to them. They had no wish to interfere with my patronage, and would be ready to receive anyone I should name, but for the reason stated they could never derive any

good from this man, and must therefore object to him. In the belief that they were sincere, I endeavoured to argue the matter with them for about an hour, but without much success. I shall meet them again the day after to-morrow for the same purpose, although, I confess, without much prospect of a better result. I am afraid they have got into bad hands. Their former law-agent would have nothing more to do with the business, but I hear that a radical attorney in Aberdeen has taken it up for them. I am convinced, from their professions towards me, that they are animated by no bad motive, but that it is sheer stupidity which makes them persevere, and an immense majority of the parish are under this delusion. It is altogether a strange business, and it is rather comical that it should have happened to me—a kind of 'eldest son of the Church.' *Sept.* 9.—I had my meeting in the Parish Church on Saturday, and did my utmost to convince the people of their error, and of my own sentiments and opinions. I cannot yet say decisively what effect has been produced, but it has certainly been considerable. Many have already avowed a change, and I am inclined to hope the greater number will retract. At the same time it is uphill work; for out of about two hundred and forty heads of families in communion with the church, upwards of two hundred had signed a paper declaratory of their intention to oppose my presentee. The ground of opposition is confined exclusively to the *fama*, and they have all along been perfectly civil and respectful to me. It is this confidence in their personal feeling towards me that has induced me to venture on such a step as calling them together in the church and haranguing them on this occasion. I have told them, from an examination of the evidence, of my firm conviction of the innocence of Mr. Whyte, and have given this opinion as if I had spoken from the jury-box. I believe this will have great weight with many; for they will trust my sincerity and will think that I am better able to judge than they are themselves. They are unfortunately under the influence of two or three bad advisers, but I rather think that I shall prove too strong for them. We shall very soon know the result, for we are to have the 'call' the day after to-morrow. I am very much inclined to attend myself on the occasion; but after the terms on which I have always lived with these people, it would require great philosophy to see them oppose me before my face. You shall hear when the affair is concluded. Meanwhile all this does not tend to recommend the veto to my affections. *Sept.* 12.—The veto affair has ended prosperously. I attended the church to-day, and after a very good but very long sermon from Mr. Robertson of Ellon, I signed the call myself, and was followed in so doing by a considerable number. No symptom of dissent appeared;

but those who had been most hostile to Mr. Whyte either did not come to the church or left it without signing. My allocution on Saturday produced a great effect, and I fairly confess that I never addressed the House of Lords with a tenth part of the interest which I felt on that occasion. Had I failed, considering the footing on which I have always stood with these people, I really should not have known what to do or what to have felt. The result is the more satisfactory as I neither threatened nor entreated, but adopted a grave, although a friendly, tone of expostulation. I have not seen the letter, but I understand the people of the parish have written to their radical agent in Aberdeen, and have given as the reason for retracting their mandate the feelings which they profess to entertain towards myself. *Sept.* 17.—The issue of Mr. Whyte's affair has been highly satisfactory, for I really believe, from all I hear, that even a better feeling exists between the people and myself than ever prevailed before. Certainly it required a strong stimulus for me to volunteer an oration in a church! Undoubtedly I felt very strongly the injustice and cruelty of their proceedings against Mr. Whyte. I told them fairly that if I had been aware of the existence of the *fama* I would not have appointed him, whether innocent or guilty; but that, having named him, and an investigation having taken place which had perfectly satisfied me of his innocence, no power on earth should induce me to abandon him. All this I felt, and all this was true; but I fear that my self-love was also deeply wounded at the notion that their conduct exhibited a deficiency of deference towards myself. It tended to prove to me that I did not possess that measure of their respect which I had flattered myself was the case. If the truth must be told, I very much fear that I was secretly even more interested for myself than for Mr. Whyte.

It is satisfactory to be able to add that Mr. Whyte speedily gained the affection and respect of his parishioners, with whom he lived in unbroken harmony for over forty years, full of good works, and died universally regretted and beloved in 1881.

Almost immediately after Mr. Whyte's induction, Dr. Chalmers paid a visit to Haddo House. In reply to an inquiry from the Dean of Faculty, Lord Aberdeen thus wrote of this visit:

Sept. 17.—You wish to know the result of Chalmers's visit here, and I can only tell you that it had no result at all. We had

a good deal of talk respecting Church matters, and especially the veto. He appeared to admit that some change was required, or at least that it might be safely agreed to; but he did not specify the points which he would concede. As far as I could understand him, I think he seemed disposed to give to the Presbytery all that he took from the people. He agreed that there should be some means of applying a remedy to cases of manifest injustice, and admitted that the instance of Mr. Whyte, which I detailed to him, was one in which it was desirable to have some means of correction. He confined himself on the whole to vague generalities, and was therefore unsatisfactory. He was decidedly of opinion that a legislative measure was indispensable, but not at all prepared with its provisions. I spoke to him pretty much in the same strain, though less favourably of the veto than formerly, and abstained from giving any opinion until I should see the heads of the Bill which it may be proposed to introduce into Parliament for the purpose of settling these affairs. We therefore adjourned our discussion until I should meet him in Edinburgh.

The case of Mr. Whyte naturally made much impression on Lord Aberdeen. Up to this time, although he had 'entertained great doubts respecting the veto,' he was by no means convinced that it was objectionable in principle, or likely to be mischievous in practice. He was now satisfied that 'it must be greatly modified before it can be made tolerable.'

To the popular election of ministers he saw comparatively little objection. It was, however, then impracticable; for it was at that time desired by but very few, and any measure attempting to legalise it was certain to be rejected by overwhelming majorities in both Houses of Parliament. But to the veto he entertained far graver objection. In the first place it was enacted against lay patrons only, and did not apply when the patronage had fallen into clerical hands. Now, the mere act of *presentation* did not save the patron's rights. If the 'settlement' of a minister was not effected in a parish within six months, the presentation lapsed to the Presbytery, and against its presentation no veto was

allowed. All, therefore, that a Presbytery, greedy of power, had to do was to promote a veto which would throw the patronage into their hands. Nor did the Act provide any of those checks upon the exercise of a popular veto which were essential to prevent its acting in a manner neither expected nor desired by its authors. These, however, were only incidental objections, which might be removed in recasting the measure. Lord Aberdeen's main objections were of a more insuperable character, viz. that it deprived the Presbytery and other Church Courts of rights properly belonging to them, and that it inflicted a stigma, probably a lifelong one, on the rejected candidate, not inflicted by rejection at a contested election, in which the question to be decided was which was the fitter of two men, whilst in this case it was a question of positive fitness.

Lord Aberdeen, though he chose to style himself a Presbyterian, and was, for the ten years from 1818 to 1828, the lay representative of the Presbytery of Ellon in the General Assembly, cannot be said to have personally belonged to that communion ; for, while he never in his life attended the administration of the Sacrament in a Scotch church, he was in the habit of receiving the Holy Communion in an English church every year on Good Friday. But he had a very keen sense of the social mischief wrought by the difference of faith and worship which subsisted between a large number of the Scottish nobility and landowners, and those who dwelt on their estates ; while he estimated very lightly the differences, whether of doctrine or discipline, between the Churches of England and Scotland. He had, moreover, the highest admiration for the work done by the Scottish clergy, and he held it to be the duty of all well-wishers of the country to uphold and assist them. He was, therefore, when in

Scotland, a constant attendant at the services of the Church.

In pursuance of these views he had exerted himself strenuously in favour of the measures of Church Extension which had been proposed, and thus came into intimate intercourse with Dr. Chalmers, the ablest of its advocates. He was, therefore, a person to whom the Church naturally looked for deliverance from its troubles, and he was induced to contemplate the idea of introducing a measure to preclude the recurrence of disputes such as had just taken place, should the Government of the day fail to undertake that duty.

It is a common error, which has been much fostered by Free Church publications, that lay patronage is in some sort repugnant to the teaching of the Scottish Reformers and the spirit of the Scottish Church; that it was abolished by the Scottish Parliament in 1690, and forced again upon the Church by the Act of the Imperial Parliament in 1712. This is a mistake. Except for a short time during the Commonwealth, the practice of presentation to preferment by patrons existed unbroken from the Reformation until patronage itself was abolished in 1874. The Act of 1690 did but transfer the right of presentation from a single patron to the heritors; that is to say, the landed proprietors of the parish, together with the elders or churchwardens. In a large number of cases the alteration in the law can have effected little alteration in practice, a great proprietor being often sole heritor of many parishes, while in all cases their number was very small when compared with that of the congregation, or even of the heads of families being communicants, whose sole right, under the Act of 1690, remained that of objection, which they had before possessed. And as to the ultimate admission or

rejection of the presentee, the Presbytery remained the judges.

In 1833 the General Assembly of the Church, when rejecting the veto, adopted a resolution to the effect that it was competent for the 'heads of families in full and regular communion with the Church, to object to the settlement of a presentee, and for the Presbytery, if they found the objections well founded, to reject the presentation.' Upon the lines of this resolution already once agreed to by the General Assembly, and embodying the understanding of ages, Lord Aberdeen proposed to found a measure for restoring peace to the Church. He had no special affection for patronage, nor any strong desire to maintain it; but, on the other hand, its destruction seemed to him uncalled for, and he knew its abolition to be at that time impossible. But he was desirous to give new life to the powers of objection and rejection which he believed to be recognised by the existing law.

Early in January 1840, on his way to London, Lord Aberdeen conferred with Dr. Chalmers and the Non-Intrusion Committee at Edinburgh. Lord Aberdeen thus described this conference:

> I took an early opportunity of declaring my assent to the principle of non-intrusion, and I ventured to suggest a mode by which it might be carried into full effect, and which it appeared to me that the Legislature might sanction. This suggestion was in substance as follows: that the Presbytery shall be bound to take a qualified presentee on trial; and in the course of the proceedings previous to ordination, the objections of the parishioners, if any, shall be received, and duly weighed by the Presbytery; such objections in every case to be accompanied with reasons assigned; but the Presbytery to be at liberty to consider the whole circumstances of the case before them, and to form their judgment without reference to the actual number of persons dissenting, or their proportion to the whole amount of communicants and heads of families in the parish—the decision of the Presbytery with respect to the fitness of any individual for the charge to which he is presented to be founded

on such full and mature consideration, and to be pronounced on their own responsibility, and according to the dictates of their hearts and consciences ; in a word, and to adopt the expression of Dr. Chalmers, it was proposed to recognise a presbyterial veto instead of the popular veto, which it had been attempted to establish by the Act of the General Assembly. . . .

The whole discussion proceeded on the understanding of the abrogation of the veto ; and more than once I expressed an anxiety effectually to prevent the possibility of an attempt to re-enact it under some different form. You may also, perhaps, recollect my declaration that I should prefer the popular election of ministers to the establishment of the veto. . . I left the meeting highly gratified by the conciliatory spirit which had been evinced by the Committee, and strongly impressed with the conviction that they had given the most favourable reception to the suggestions which had been offered for their consideration.

There was a party in the Non-Intrusion Committee which this arrangement did not satisfy ; but Dr. Chalmers and the Committee generally agreed, that reasons should in all cases of dissent be assigned, and that if a *liberum arbitrium* were granted to the Presbytery it would be sufficient. This *liberum arbitrium*, however, the more violent party sought practically to limit, by making it imperative for the Presbytery to reject, if a majority of the parishioners, even without reasons, dissented from the presentation. This was the real and somewhat narrow point of difference. Lord Aberdeen was willing to permit the Presbytery, if it thought fit, to reject on the ground of unsuitableness due to inacceptability. The Committee desired, covertly or openly, to enact that it *must* do so. Dr. Chalmers, however, was very decided in his opinion that the free judgment of the Presbytery, 'though not all that the Church might wish, would be, and ought to be, accepted as sufficient.' During the spring Lord Aberdeen occupied himself in correspondence with Dr. Chalmers, and in giving shape to his measure. After fully considering several alternative schemes, some of which he rejected as undesirable and others as impracti-

cable, he prepared a Bill which recognised the right of any communicant to make objections of any kind to the individual presented, or assign any reason against his settlement, or against his gifts and qualifications for the cure of the particular parish to which he was presented; and the right of the Presbytery, 'if it or other Church Court shall be of opinion, due regard being had to the whole circumstances and condition of the parish, and to the spiritual welfare and edification of the people, that in respect of any of the said objections or reasons the individual presented ought not to be settled in the said parish,' to reject him. It is clear, therefore, that while under this Bill the mere fact of unacceptability to a majority of the parishioners would not be regarded as a valid objection, the allegation that the disfavour with which the presentee was regarded was such as to destroy his chance of future usefulness was one which might be urged, and to which the Presbytery, if it saw fit, might give effect. This, though giving to the Presbytery the free judgment for which Dr. Chalmers contended, did not, of course, satisfy those who, under cover of the words *liberum arbitrium*, meant, in the event of the dissent of a majority, to take away all freedom from the Presbytery, and compel it, through a direction of the Assembly, to give effect without discretion to the objections of the congregation.

Before bringing in the Bill, Lord Aberdeen showed it to Messrs. Hamilton and Buchanan, who had been sent up by the Assembly to confer with him. They proposed certain amendments which they said were not inconsistent with the principle of the Bill, and which Lord Aberdeen was not unwilling to adopt. Had he done so, the question would probably, for the time at least, have been settled, and the Disruption, if not averted, at all events reduced to very

small proportions. Unfortunately, as I cannot but think, the Dean of Faculty was at the time in England, whither he had come to place his sons at school at Hatfield, and was within reach of the Priory, where Lord Aberdeen then was. He denounced the amendments, partly as carrying out covertly the popular veto, and partly as compromising Lord Aberdeen's position of independence. Thoroughly self-confident, and possessing that influence which a strong narrow mind of a positive, overbearing type often exerts over a mind of much higher quality, in which self-distrust and humility are leading characteristics, the Dean succeeded in persuading Lord Aberdeen to defer to his advice. Several of the amendments suggested were adopted, but the most important clauses in the Bill were allowed to remain unchanged. Lord Aberdeen was the more inclined to follow this course because he felt that his Bill already gave all that the objectors professed to ask in the amendments they proposed. On May 5 he read his Bill a first time in the House of Lords.

The leading Scotch peers present heartily supported the Bill, and Lord Melbourne, then Prime Minister, said a few complimentary words, but would not commit himself either to support or oppose it. But he showed his inability to realise the gravity of the position by saying that 'the occasion which had arisen was not by any means so grave and serious' as Lord Aberdeen's speech was calculated to make the House suppose, and that 'the exigency was in no respect so pressing as it had been represented.' On returning from the House of Lords, Lord Aberdeen at once wrote to Dr. Chalmers. He concluded his letter as follows:

I believe that the peace of the Church is at this moment in your hands; for, although, from the accident of birth and social position, I have had the means of proposing this measure

to the Legislature, it will depend on you whether it is to receive life and efficacy.

I pray that you may be led by the spirit of wisdom; and that your great talents may be directed to the restoration of peace and order, and to the happy union of all the real friends of the Church.

'*Semper honos nomenque tuum, laudesque manebunt.*'

The genius of Dr. Chalmers, his piety and eloquence, and the noble disinterestedness displayed by the ministers whose secession from the Established Church he headed rather than led, have thrown a veil over the weaknesses of a singularly complex character. He now found himself in a position of considerable difficulty. Without any intention to deceive, he had used language to Lord Aberdeen on the one hand, and to the more extreme members of the Non-Intrusion Committee on the other, which gave to each a right to claim his support. He could not deny that he had given Lord Aberdeen to understand that he was prepared to repeal the Veto Act, to require the assignment of reasons in all cases of objection to a presentation on the part of the people, and to substitute a presbyterial for a popular veto. But he allowed the Non-Intrusion Committee to believe that in so doing he would insist that the action of the Presbytery should be subject to the directions of the General Assembly, or, in other words, to the Veto Act itself, which, though admitted to be illegal as an enactment, might, being unrepealed, retain force as an ecclesiastical Regulation, with the provisions of which the clergy, under pain of spiritual censures, would be still bound to comply. Dr. Chalmers had up to this time been the advocate of conciliation, and as such had often found himself in a minority on the Non-Intrusion Committee. It cannot be questioned, that he thought a settlement might be arrived at on the principles which Lord Aberdeen had announced as

those of his measure. But after some days' discussion with the more violent members of the Committee, in which (if Lord Aberdeen was not misinformed) Dr. Chalmers sought to secure, if not approval of the proposed measure, at least acquiescence in it, he was obliged to relinquish the hope of effecting such an agreement. He had then to decide between severance from a large section of his party and hostility to Lord Aberdeen's Bill. His choice was soon substantially made; but he hoped still to delay, if not avert, an open rupture. The Bill, he said, limited the free judgment of the Presbytery in a manner which Lord Aberdeen had not led him to expect, and he was therefore unable to support it *in its present shape*. But he held out the expectation that, with some modification, the Bill might still be the basis of settlement. He thus hoped, on the one hand, to satisfy those who opposed the Bill, and on the other to continue negotiations with Lord Aberdeen as to the modification of his measure. The main principles of that Bill were, on the one hand, the recognition of the right of a presbytery to reject an unsuitable presentee, and, on the other, the prohibition of a popular veto unaccompanied by reasons. These two points had from the first been clearly laid down in all Lord Aberdeen's letters; one, the presbyterial veto, was Dr. Chalmers's own suggestion, and the other had been unequivocally accepted by him. But if these principles were mutually accepted, the details of the Bill became matter to be dealt with by the suggestion of amendments to be introduced into it when in Committee. It was too late at that period to take exception to what Lord Aberdeen had from the first stated to be the basis of his measure. If the objection to what he proposed was fundamental, it should have been stated to be so at the outset, and Lord Aberdeen should not have been encouraged to undertake a task from

which no useful result could be anticipated. If, on the other hand, the objection was one of detail, however earnestly it might be pressed, it should not have been made the ground of rejecting the measure as a whole. All this Dr. Chalmers, it may be presumed, felt, and he was consequently disposed to adopt a temporising course, intermediate between adoption and rejection of the Bill. But this by no means satisfied the more extreme Non-Intrusionists, who daily crossed the Forth to confer with Dr. Chalmers at Burntisland, where he was then living. Violent discussions, it is said—in which complaints of Dr. Chalmers's so-styled secret communications with Lord Aberdeen, and even threats founded on some equivocal propositions in his lectures, are stated to have been freely uttered—took place in his presence. Of these discussions the result was that he, greatly embarrassed, absented himself altogether from the meeting of the Synod of Lothian, at which the reception to be given to Lord Aberdeen's Bill was to form the chief subject of discussion. His absence left the more violent party free from all check or control, and when brought face to face with the warm supporters of Lord Aberdeen's Bill, they condemned that Bill and its author in the most extravagant terms.

The meeting was thus described in a letter from Dr. Muir to the Dean of Faculty :

> Language the most violent, vituperation quite exorbitant, passion inflated beyond conception, characterised the opponents of the Bill. That the Bill 'deposed the Lord Jesus Christ from His mediatorial throne'; that the Bill is fraught with elements calculated to destroy the Established Church, were some among the mild epithets by which Lord Aberdeen's measure was characterised. Dr. Chalmers was not present. My opinion is that he has been awaiting the result. His son-in-law, Mr. Hanna, was there, and though he some time ago indicated an intention to coincide with Mr. Tait, Mr. Hunter, and myself, he started off to the side of Mr. Cunninghame.

This I deem a decided indication of what Dr. Chalmers is to do. He sails with the tide—sixty to twenty!—that he can never resist. I predict, therefore, that he is now primed for the Assembly.

On receiving this intelligence, Lord Aberdeen addressed Dr. Chalmers in tones of grave remonstrance, as follows:

. . . It is right you should know that the only intimation of any objection or opposition in Parliament to the Bill has arisen exclusively from the opinion that I have recognised too great a discretionary power in the Church Courts—a power which, whatever may have been their pretensions, is held, and by high authority, to be unwarranted.

Notwithstanding the opinions entertained in Parliament on this subject, I feel confident of being able to carry the Bill through both Houses in its present form, provided it is acquiesced in by the Assembly; and that, too, without any proceeding by the Assembly on the subject of the Veto Act. It seems clear, from the speeches in the Synod to which I have alluded, that no repeal of the veto, by a declaration of the incompetency of the Assembly, is to be expected; but I think that Parliament would be disposed to regard the Act as a nullity, and as possessing no force or validity against the law of the land.

The result, therefore, is now in your hands. It is for you to consider, with the admitted necessity of legislative interference, and with the certainty that no measure will be sanctioned by Parliament more favourable to the Church than that which I have now proposed—whether you will prolong a state of things pregnant with danger to the Establishment, and which I am persuaded may but too probably lead to its destruction. I would venture, with as much solemnity as it is befitting me to assume, to point out the heavy responsibility of following such a course.

Dr. Chalmers replied that he had not been at the Synod, and should have a different motion to bring before the Assembly; that he was much comforted and relieved by the contents of Lord Aberdeen's letters, and hoped shortly to be able to announce such a common understanding as would lead the Church, if not positively to approve of the Bill as absolutely the most desirable, at least to acquiesce in it as a good working measure.

The Assembly met on May 22nd. On that day Dr. Chalmers wrote to Lord Aberdeen as follows :

> I beg your attention to my brief allusion to your lordship's Bill. I meant it as preparatory to the expression afterwards of my wish, that it should be made the basis of a negotiation with your lordship. . . .
>
> I expect to send you from time to time brief notices of what is going on.

It is clear, therefore, that up to this time Dr. Chalmers was anxious not to shut the door upon negotiation, and that he still hoped to make Lord Aberdeen's Bill the basis for an understanding which his own party might be brought to accept. But he could not control his own friends, and it was made manifest to him that he could not retain his position as their leader without adopting the course prescribed by them.

Within twenty-four hours after the above letter was written, Dr. Chalmers addressed a few cold lines to Lord Aberdeen expressing regret that his recent communications did not warrant the hopes which he had founded on all their previous correspondence ; nor, although Lord Aberdeen gave him an opportunity of doing so, did he ever again, orally or by letter, communicate with Lord Aberdeen, on whom he was induced to make a personal attack accusing him of having misled and deceived the Church. He himself moved the resolution condemning the Bill. His now decided opposition rendered approval of the measure by the Assembly hopeless. But its rejection by that body was rendered more decisive by certain well-meant but ill-judged negotiations undertaken by Sir George Clerk, from which the dominant party in the Assembly drew the not unnatural conclusion, that, if Lord Aberdeen's Bill were rejected, a measure more in harmony with their own wishes would be introduced into Parliament. Dr. Chalmers's motion was carried by a majority of 87.

The Assembly sat a few days longer, during which the excitement of its members only increased.

I remained to the close of the Assembly (wrote Mr. Pringle on June 2nd) at four o'clock this morning, by which I was the better enabled to form an estimate of their temper and fanaticism than was indicated in any previous part of their proceedings. If it had not been for the impossibility to call the roll at that hour for a division, I do believe that they would have carried by acclamation any resolution of any kind, however wild, which Dunlop might have cared to move, however irregularly.

A certain degree of misgiving, however, appeared to come over the Non-Intrusion party when the Assembly had risen, and they more calmly considered what had been done, and the terms of settlement they had rejected. The first act of the newly appointed Non-Intrusion Committee was to dismiss their secretaries, Messrs. Candlish and Dunlop, on account of their violence, and to express a wish to reopen negotiation with Lord Aberdeen; while Dr. Chalmers, who had retired both from the Non-Intrusion Committee and from the General Assembly itself, put forth a pamphlet in which he emphatically declared that 'the first thing' the Church ought to do was to repeal the Veto Law, which had been not only declared illegal, but which it was clear the Legislature would not adopt. Had this advice been taken, a peaceful settlement of the question would, without doubt, have been effected; but it was treated with derision by the more active members of the party of which Dr. Chalmers was made to feel that he was no longer the true leader, and of which he could only preserve the titular headship at the price of compliance with all the dictates of its real managers. This interval of moderation was, however, but of short duration. The violent party shortly recovered its complete ascendency, and those members of the Committee who were favourable to Lord Aberdeen's Bill were forced to quit it.

Rejected by the Assembly, unsupported by the Government, and denounced by the Law Lords as containing dangerous concessions to the Church, it was clear that Lord Aberdeen's Bill had little prospect of becoming law. On the strong advice of Sir Robert Peel, however, he determined to proceed with the measure, and the Bill was accordingly read a second time on June 16th.

Lord Melbourne's own opinion was favourable to Lord Aberdeen's Bill; but, on the one hand, the Chancellor and others in the Cabinet were hotly opposed to what seemed to them the grant of undue privileges to the Church, and on the other, the Lord Advocate and party managers in Scotland were urgent that for political reasons he should not offend the extreme Non-Intrusionist party, who were to a great extent supporters of the existing Government. In these circumstances Lord Melbourne found an admirable excuse for indulging his own constitutional disposition to 'let things alone.' His speech was a curiosity of cautious hedging.

> He would not (he said) enter upon the whole question, but would only say that it was not so certain that the Bill would decide the question as to make it prudent to proceed with it. He gave no opinion upon the Bill. He did not wish to say whether it was or was not now the law of Scotland, as had been contended, but he meant to say that it was not so certain to be of avail and advantage as to make it prudent for their lordships to proceed. He did not mean to say that a Bill framed in that spirit might not be suited to the occasion, but he thought the House ought not to proceed at present with the measure, seeing that a measure exactly similar might be brought forward on any occasion when time and further experience should have shown that it would be likely to be beneficial.

This remarkably lukewarm opposition from the Premier did not prevent the Bill being read a second time by a large majority.

It now seemed not improbable that, after all, the Bill would become law. On June 22nd Lord Aberdeen wrote:

I met Melbourne accidentally to-day in the Park, and walked with him for some time. . . . He evidently himself would not object to the Bill going on, and even said it was not too late to withdraw opposition; but I am persuaded that he will not venture to do anything of the kind.

And a few days later he continues:

I have been with Lord John this morning, and have fully explained to him my situation and intentions. He is not unwilling to let the Bill pass through the House of Commons, but he is greatly afraid of his friends. Were it not for the Advocate and Fox Maule there would be no difficulty at all about the matter. But personally compromised as they are, they cannot give way; and it is scarcely possible for the Government to take it upon themselves to neglect the remonstrances of their own officers. Lord John promised to speak to Melbourne; and he would endeavour with him to see if they could not contrive not to oppose the Bill. He is to let me know in two or three days what is the result.

This result was an overture to withdraw opposition to the Bill if Lord Aberdeen would consent to restrict to a majority the right to object given by it to any parishioner. As this alteration would have only made the Bill more distasteful to the Church, and deprived individual parishioners of a right which Lord Aberdeen believed them already to enjoy, and which he thought they ought to enjoy, he was, of course, unable to assent to this proposal, and after passing the Bill through Committee he decided to withdraw it.

Lord Aberdeen felt very deeply the treatment he had received at the hands of the Church leaders. He had, as he himself said, a 'habit of believing people,' and he had accepted without reserve their expressions of a readiness to accept any substitute for the veto which would secure the rejection of an unfit presentee. He now could not but believe that some of them had all along entertained fixed objects which they had not avowed, with which they knew he had no sympathy, but for which they hoped to engage

his support without his own knowledge. To Dr. Chalmers himself he only attributed the weakness of having allowed himself to be driven from the position he wished to assume through fear of offending those with whom he acted. To attribute any other course to Dr. Chalmers, and to claim for him, as his biographer and the writers of the Free Church have done, the credit of unswerving insistence on the popular veto, is to accuse him of far worse than weakness. Whatever may have been the case with others, it is impossible that Dr. Chalmers can have had any doubt as to Lord Aberdeen's meaning, explicitly declared and frequently repeated. If the exclusion of an absolute veto by the people were an insuperable bar to the acceptance of Lord Aberdeen's Bill, honesty required that he should have been at once told so; and if the fundamental principle of the Bill was erroneous, such a note as that of May 22 from Dr. Chalmers should not have been written.

Up to this time, although the questions of principle underlying it had not been left out of view, the practical question of the best mode of securing the non-intrusion of unfit ministers was that which had most occupied the public mind, and to which most prominence had been given. But a much graver question, which threw that of Non-Intrusion comparatively into the shade, was now daily assuming increased prominence. The claim to independence put forward on the part of the Church is one not easily made intelligible to English ears, nor is it indeed compatible with the fundamental idea of an Established Church, as those who raised it in the end acknowledged. Nor is it even compatible with the ordinary obligations of civil society. Even in a Church wholly unconnected with the State, it is perfectly competent to any individual to

appeal to the Courts of Law to decide whether an exercise of authority by which he has been deprived of any civil right is such as those exercising it are justified in having resort to by the terms of the compact on which they rely.

The principle that the interpretation of Statute Law must rest with the Courts of Law, and that their interpretation must be obeyed, and, if need be, enforced, rises in the South (or until lately rose) to the position of an axiom; but in Scotland a large following was prepared to adopt with acclamation the proposition that the Courts of Law had no sort of jurisdiction over any question which the General Assembly had declared within the competence of the Ecclesiastical Courts, and that 'all Acts of the Parliament of Great Britain passed without consent of the Church and nation, in alteration of or derogative to the government, discipline, rights and privileges of the Church, and also all sentences of Courts in contravention of the said government, discipline, rights and privileges, *are* and shall be *null and void*.'[1]

To such pretensions but one answer could be given, and in repudiating them statesmen of all parties concurred. In this matter, Sir Robert Peel and Lord John Russell, Lord Melbourne and Lord Aberdeen, were altogether at one.

The judgment of the House of Lords, which declared the passing of the Veto Act by the General Assembly to have been *ultra vires* and null, and confirmed the decree of the Court of Session ordering the Presbytery of Auchterarder to proceed to the trial of the presentee, was, of course, of general application. Another vetoed minister, the presentee to the parish of Marnoch, applied to the Court of Session to issue a similar decree to the Presbytery of Strath-

[1] General Assembly's 'Claim of Right, 1842.

bogie on his behalf. The Court of Session complied with his prayer. The proceeding was somewhat analogous to that of moving in the Court of Queen's Bench for a mandamus to compel a bishop to hear a suit which he had declined to entertain. The Court did not prescribe the judgment to be given by the ecclesiastical authority. It did not even prescribe the procedure. It did not direct the Presbytery to ordain, as the Non-Intrusionists laboured hard to prove it did; but it did direct it to perform the proper function imposed on it by statute, of inquiring whether the presentee lawfully presented was or was not qualified for ordination. This, however, the dominant party in the Assembly regarded as an intrusion into things spiritual, and prohibited the Presbytery from obeying the decree of the Court of Session. The majority of the Presbytery, nevertheless, resolved to perform their statutable duty, as directed by the Court. They did not proceed to ordain the presentee, but they examined him, and reported him qualified, and for so doing they were at once suspended from all clerical functions by the General Assembly.

The suspended ministers appealed by petition to the House of Lords for protection, and their petition was presented to the House by Lord Aberdeen on June 19.

> It never happened to me before (he wrote) to speak to an audience every one of whom by his looks and voice and manner gave evident token of his agreeing in every word I said. When I say every one of my audience, I must except the unhappy Breadalbane, who literally stood alone. . . . I felt that every word *told*; and that the whole thing was very effective.

During the autumn and winter of 1840 the agitation in favour of Non-Intrusion continued and increased, and a new feature was given to it by the conversion of the leading members of the dominant party to the view that the total abolition of patronage afforded the only effectual safeguard

against the intrusion of unacceptable ministers. To such a settlement of the question Lord Aberdeen would have felt no strong repugnance; but it was useless at that time to regard it as a practical solution of the difficulty, as it would have been impossible to force a measure giving effect to it through the Legislature. Nor would any settlement, however satisfactory, of the Non-Intrusion question alone have now sufficed altogether to restore peace, for the Church was daily, step by step, committing itself more deeply to the assertion of claims in which no civil government could for a moment acquiesce.

On the reassembling of Parliament in 1841 Lord Aberdeen was questioned as to the course which he proposed to pursue. He replied that he did not at present intend to renew his action of the previous year.

Different as were the objections made to it—the Lord Chancellor deeming it a violation of the rights of the Crown and the laity, and the General Assembly regarding it as 'riveting the chains of patronage,' and an attempt to 'dethrone the Redeemer'—they were united in practical opposition to the Bill. He hoped it was not liable to either class of the objections urged against it; but combined, they appeared to deprive him of all chance of effecting the only good he hoped for—that of restoring peace.

My limits preclude me from entering at any length on the measure which, on Lord Aberdeen's withdrawal, the late Duke of Argyll announced his intention to propose. The head of a great house, distinguished for its attachment to the Scottish Church, he possessed a species of hereditary claim to undertake a task for which he had few other qualifications. Had he persevered, it was Lord Aberdeen's intention to move amendments which would have made the Bill essentially conformable to his own.

I think (he wrote) I could manage to do this without much difficulty; and when done, it would probably be less unacceptable to the majority of the Assembly, and less humiliating to

them than to return to my original Bill. I continue to have much discussion with Lord John. He still adheres to the necessity of having a majority to dissent. Such is his opinion of the Presbyteries that he fears they will excite the objections of a few in order to give effect to them afterwards. He told me that the matter had been discussed some time ago in the Cabinet, and that it was determined they should support my Bill if I would agree to adopt the provision of a majority.

The defeat of the Government, however, and the dissolution of Parliament which followed, practically put an end to any further action on the part of the Duke of Argyll.

From an early period of the session of 1841 it had become evident that the days of the Melbourne Ministry were numbered, and that Sir Robert Peel and Lord Aberdeen would speedily be at the head of a Government in which the influence of the latter on Scotch matters would be paramount. This fact, and the reaction produced by the violence and illegality of the proceedings of the Church leaders, led during the summer to attempts at arrangement, which Lord Aberdeen willingly promoted.

The result of these conferences was that Bills were prepared, different in form but containing the essential principle of Lord Aberdeen's Bill; and it was settled that Sir George Sinclair should receive powers from the Church authorities to propose to the Government a Bill so altered, and that the new Government, which had now succeeded that of Lord Melbourne, should accept it.

There was, therefore, every prospect that the preliminary agreement on the questions at issue would be crowned with complete success; and it probably would have been so but for an unlucky accident.

On the very day on which the arrangement was to be carried into effect, by the ratification of the Non-Intrusion Committee, the news of an unexpected indiscretion on the part of the new Lord Advocate, Sir William Rae, wholly

defeated it. He had vacated his seat by accepting office, and had to undergo re-election in Bute. He was unopposed, and need have made no embarrassing declarations, but he thought proper to announce that the Government had a measure in view for the settlement of the Church question, and that it would be a liberal measure, going even beyond that of the Duke of Argyll. The natural result followed.

Cunningham, *Candlish*, and Bruce (wrote the Dean of Faculty), though at first much excited by the speech, concurred in the resolution to propose to give Sir G. Sinclair the requisite powers ; but Dunlop refused to attend, and at the meeting of the Non-Intrusion Committee succeeded in persuading a majority to reject the plan. Up to the moment of seeing Rae's speech the clergy were in perfect earnest—most anxious, most thankful—and the readiness which they showed as to the adjustment of the Strathbogie case marked how anxious they were to get out of the whole scrape. From what Candlish and Cunningham said to Sinclair, there is no doubt that Dunlop and the other Whigs worked on the Committee (of course for *double* mischief) by the aid of Rae's speech ; and no wonder, for they said : 'Here it is announced that the Government have a plan : you see *how* it is described : how absurd it is in us *now* to agree to something so far short of the lowest meaning that the Lord Advocate's words are susceptible of. . . .'

Of course the Lord Advocate's uncalled-for blundering, and its results, gave great disappointment to Lord Aberdeen and the rest of the Cabinet who took interest in the question. Sir R. Peel and Sir James Graham were so sure of success, that they had begun to discuss whether the session should not be prolonged in order to pass the necessary Bill. Sir James Graham wrote to Lord Aberdeen :

Nothing can be more tantalising and annoying than this total failure on the eve of complete success. I have not seen the report of Rae's speech ; if it be inaccurate he must instantly publish a correction of it, and endeavour to remove the false impression which unhappily he has produced ; if it be accurate, he must acknowledge the error into which he himself has fallen, and avow that he spoke without authority, and that the Government disclaims any promise or intention of legislation such as he seems to have contemplated. No time should be lost.

This course was at once adopted, but the mischief had been done; and though negotiations were renewed, and Sir George Sinclair ultimately received a species of authority from the Committee to accept Lord Aberdeen's Bill with the addition proposed by him, which Lord Aberdeen was ready to adopt, the golden moment had passed irrecoverably; for the Committee rose in its demands, and attached to the additional clause a meaning which it would not bear, and when this was pointed out, professed that they had accepted it under a mistaken impression. They, in truth, decided to await the proposals which they still expected would be made to them by the Government, and which they still thought would be more favourable to them. Lord Aberdeen then wrote:

> I am of opinion that we ought to suspend all negotiations with the dominant party at present. They know to what we would have acceded; and I see no reason to advance a step further. We were disposed to assent to a proposal made to us; and we may listen to, but not invite, any other.

I am not writing the History of the Disruption of the Scottish Church Establishment, but that of Lord Aberdeen's share in the transactions connected with it. The year 1842, so far as he was concerned, was comparatively one of quiescence as regards ecclesiastical affairs. Acting on his advice, no measure was introduced by the Government with a view of altering the law, and his occupations as Secretary of State hindered his active intervention in the progress of events in Scotland. But though the Government was quiescent, the Church was far from being so. On May 25, 1842, the General Assembly adopted its famous 'Claim of Right,' and in the following November resolutions were adopted at a Convocation of Non-Intrusionists held at Glasgow, which pledged those who voted for it to secession in the event of that claim being rejected. A

secession of greater or less magnitude was now inevitable, for the 'Claim of Right' was one which no Civil Government or Legislature could admit on the part of an Established Church, or indeed any other; and Lord Aberdeen thought that the time had now come for legislation with a view to limiting the approaching schism to the smallest possible dimensions.

I do not agree with you (he wrote on March 10, 1843, to the Lord Justice-Clerk, as the Dean of Faculty had now become) in the opinion you express of the inexpediency of attempting anything at present. I am inclined to think that we ought to make an effort to prevent the great secession which now seems inevitable. I believe we may carry through Parliament anything we think likely to be of use; and if Parliament and the Government are united in their support of that which will satisfy all the reasonable portion of the Church, we may hope matters will gradually become tranquil. . . . Your letter is at present in Peel's hands, and he is, I think, very likely to agree in the view you take of the question. Probably more entirely than I can do, although I fully admit there is great force in all you say. I have not time at present to explain more fully the reasons which make me demur in arriving at your conclusion.

On March 28th he says:

I do not now think there is much probability of a Bill being attempted. I was the only person who desired it, and this was chiefly with a wish to save these poor fellows if possible. I fear they will not have courage to break off from their party in any great numbers, unless under such encouragement.

Lord Aberdeen was perfectly right, and Sir James Graham in later years loudly and emphatically expressed his bitter regret at having disregarded Lord Aberdeen's deliberate and independent judgment on this occasion; 'the only time I ever did so.' But the strong and vehement opposition of the Lord Justice-Clerk prevailed; the offer of legislation was delayed till the meeting of the General Assembly in May; and a secession then took place, the dimensions of which must have not a little surprised that eminent personage, who up to the last moment had

thought that the number of seceders would be small. It is curious to observe how often the acutest lawyers are deceived by their over-estimate of the power of the written law.

The need of a provision against the intrusion of unfit persons into a parochial charge did not cease with the secession ; and, the Assembly having resolved that the illegal Veto Act had been *ab initio* null and void, Lord Aberdeen reintroduced his Bill, which was strenuously objected to by the English Law Lords as giving too much power to the Church. Greville's Diary gives a specimen of the views in this sense expressed even by the Lord Chancellor, who had to defend the Bill. It may be judged from this what chance there would have been of passing such a Bill as the authors of the 'Claim of Right' desired. Lord Aberdeen's Act became law in August 1843, and remained in force until the abolition of patronage in 1874.

CHAPTER VII

FOREIGN OFFICE : 1841–1846

Relations with France—The Tahiti Affair—The Greek Revolution—The Spanish Marriages—The Ashburton and Oregon Treaties—Questions raised in connection with Texas—Farewells of M. Guizot and Mme. de Lieven.

THE desire to follow out the Scottish Church Question to its end has led me to anticipate events. We must now return to 1841, and the overthrow of the Melbourne Ministry. On Sir Robert Peel's accession to power, Lord Aberdeen had, as a matter of course, returned to the Foreign Office. He resumed the seals of that department with very different authority from that which belonged to him when he first received them thirteen years before. Not only did he possess, in a far higher degree than he had then done, general confidence and respect, but his relation towards the chief of the Government was wholly different from what it had been in 1828. He had regarded the Duke of Wellington as his superior, and shown to him a deference which he never accorded to Sir Robert Peel, with whom he had grown up from boyhood on an intimate footing of perfect equality. A still more important difference resulted from the fact that while the Duke of Wellington, when Prime Minister, occupied himself largely with foreign affairs, which he liked and understood, Sir Robert Peel, who did not so well understand them, was content to leave their control and management as entirely

in the hands of Lord Aberdeen, as in the Melbourne Cabinet they had been in those of Lord Palmerston.

The principal achievement of the five years spent by Lord Aberdeen at the Foreign Office, and which were unquestionably the most successful and the happiest of his official life, was the establishment and maintenance of a cordial and intimate understanding with the French Government.

The present generation is hardly able fully to estimate the difficulties of effecting such an understanding. France and England are at the present day bound together by many ties. The manners and character of the French people are no longer regarded by the average Englishman with contempt and ridicule. France, as a nation, is now neither feared nor hated by England, and while it must be confessed that antipathy to England is still too common in France, it does not possess the same intensity as during the first half of the present century. The jealousy and suspicion with which Englishmen then regarded France have been to a great degree transferred to Russia; while Germany, rather than England, is now the object of French hatred and ill-will. Memories of Sedan have obscured those of Waterloo.

But in 1841 France was still, and justly, regarded as the most formidable enemy with which England could be called on to contend in Europe, and as the power with which, owing to the existence of conflicting interests in every quarter of the globe, disputes were most likely to arise, while the memories of defeat had roused passions which rendered the settlement of such disputes particularly difficult. The ill feeling ordinarily existing towards England in France was, in 1841, accentuated by the successful efforts of M. Thiers to stimulate it in the previous year—efforts

which had led the two countries to the brink of war,—and by the irritation of the Cabinet which had succeeded him, at the want of consideration shown by Lord Palmerston to its exertions in the cause of peace. For this state of things it was Lord Aberdeen's aim to substitute a cordial alliance, but an alliance of a peculiar character. England and France united might indeed dictate to the world: but Lord Aberdeen coveted no such dictation. While on friendly terms with France, and acting in concert with her, it was his object at the same time to preserve intimate relations with those Powers, the alliance of which with England acted as a check on France. A good understanding with France alone would have left too much in her power. To be of real value to England, the understanding must be one not calculated to disturb the susceptibilities of other great Powers in Europe. Lord Aberdeen therefore strained every nerve to secure the same cordial goodwill on the part of other nations that he had obtained from the French, and with such success, that when, in spite of the perfect understanding between their Governments, the mutual suspicion and dislike of the two nations seemed about to make a cause of war out of a trumpery quarrel, the Emperor of Russia, who had no personal or national interest in the matter in dispute, offered to place his fleet at the disposal of the Queen of England.

Lord Aberdeen's efforts to put the relations of France and England on a satisfactory footing were cordially met by equal efforts on the part of Louis Philippe and his minister. Louis Philippe was determined at all costs to remain at peace with England, and M. Guizot attached no less importance to its preservation. Between Lord Aberdeen and Guizot there was a similarity of character which enabled them thoroughly to appreciate and under-

stand each other. Each was essentially a scholar and philosopher, to whom the conduct of public affairs was comparatively an accident of life, not its most absorbing interest and business. In both, a reserved and austere exterior covered, and all but concealed, an exquisite tenderness, little suspected by those with whom they ordinarily came in contact in the world. Each had a profound and half-scornful sense of the comparative triviality of even the most important affairs with which they had to deal. Each was sincerely and simply religious, and rigid in his notions of public virtue. Each was a lover of peace for its own sake, estimating but lightly the value of military glory, and perhaps underrating the amount of ability involved in military exploits. They soon became bound to each other not only by ties of mutual esteem as public men, but by those of strong personal affection. In this personal character of the famous *entente cordiale* lay both its strength and its weakness.

The greatest difficulty encountered by both statesmen was that of inducing their subordinate agents to act in the spirit of their own understanding. Each had in this task to contend with nearly the same degree of obstinate prejudice. There was hardly an English agent abroad, whether ambassador, minister, or consul, who did not think that opposition to France was necessarily the soundest English policy, or who did not feel a kind of superior and contemptuous pity for the blindness and weakness of a Secretary of State who allowed himself, as they supposed, to be duped by the professions of a French statesman. And if this was the case among English agents, similar feelings exercised a yet stronger influence over those of France. English public servants might differ from or even despise their chiefs, but as a rule they obeyed them The

bonds of discipline were far looser in the French service. French diplomatists abroad hardly concealed, and indeed in many cases did not conceal, their indignation at the tameness of a Minister whom they stigmatised as corrupted by *la perfide Albion.* Only too often they almost openly defied their instructions, and, relying on the certainty of support in the Chambers and in the Press, intrigued against and opposed the English colleagues with whom they had been told to act in concert.

The extent of the difficulty thus created can only be truly estimated when it is remembered that the spirit in question was strongest, and its exhibition least liable to control, among the minor agents of both Powers : the host of consuls who cover the face of the globe. Wherever an English and a French consul were stationed, each regarded the other as a natural enemy. Each regarded the actions and wishes of the other with dislike and distrust, and considered it an even more imperative duty to thwart (as the case might be) English or French interests (or what to their narrow local view seemed to be such) than to advance those of his own country.

The most serious danger to the friendly relations between the two countries which arose during Lord Aberdeen's administration was due to an obscure collision of this character in Tahiti ; where an English subject, who had once been a missionary, and subsequently a consul, but who, at the time in question, was neither the one nor the other, was, on political grounds, imprisoned with some harshness and indignity by the French governor.

Had the conduct of foreign affairs been in other hands in either country ; had Thiers presided over them in France, or Palmerston been Secretary of State in England, war would all but inevitably have ensued. The excitement in both countries

was extreme. The demand for punishment of the outrage on a British consul, as Mr. Pritchard was universally though erroneously styled, was all but unanimous, and the fact that he had been a missionary led to a clamour for war from those who were usually ministers of peace. Sir Robert Peel himself was carried away by the torrent, and made a speech which rendered the difficult task of those who were labouring to preserve peace yet more difficult. This speech he had afterwards to modify, and expressed regret for having made it.

Guizot and Aberdeen were, however, determined that, so long as they remained ministers, hostilities should not ensue, and that, if indeed the war fever prevailed, it should only be through the overthrow of both. But the danger was grave. A majority of the English Cabinet, including the Prime Minister, were for the adoption of measures which must have rendered war inevitable, and which were with difficulty averted by Lord Aberdeen ; while, on the other hand, the indemnity which the French Government agreed to pay to the aggrieved Englishman had to be defrayed by the King from his own Civil List, as no vote for its payment could be proposed to the Chamber of Deputies with any chance of success.

Had this 'senseless outcry' really proved too strong for their control, the two Ministers had agreed to resign on the same day. How nearly this result was reached is shown by the following extracts from Lord Aberdeen's letters to Madame de Lieven :

> You may imagine how very critical our situation must have been, when I tell you that the Speech was read and approved by the Queen in Council at Windsor on Tuesday, and that it did not contain a single word of allusion to France, or to any foreign matter whatever. This silence would have been eloquent, and the lamentable consequences awaiting us would have been as clearly announced by it as by any words. . . .

You could have formed no conception of the state of publick feeling in this country. I saw it with astonishment and regret, but it was impossible to deny that persons of all ranks and classes had made up their minds to war; even those from whom it could least have been expected. People are easily reconciled to what they believe to be inevitable, and this appeared to be the universal persuasion.

In the same letter he told the Princess that 'notwithstanding her incredulity, she would at last be convinced, and perhaps before long, of the sincerity of his desire to abandon all official employment.' She replied:

Vous choisissez mal votre moment pour me menacer de votre retraite. Comment! Lorsque vous venez de donner une preuve si frappante de l'importance attachée à votre personne, à votre jugement, à votre influence, vous parlez de quitter la partie? Vous savez que sans vous la paix était compromise; vous savez que sans vous elle pourrait l'être demain, et vous enverriez comme cela promener l'Europe? Oh non, my lord, cela ne peut plus être. Vous avez perdu le droit de le faire et même de le dire. Je ne puis plus douter de la sincérité de votre désir, car il doit être bien ardent pour que vous ayiez pu vous livrer à une pensée pareille dans un pareil moment, après une pareille épreuve de votre puissance. Je crois donc à vos vœux tant que vous voudrez, mais je le répète, vous n'avez plus le droit de vous retirer. La paix du monde doit passer avant vos goûts et vos inclinations, et,—Dieu merci,—vous avez trop d'honneur au cœur pour ne pas savoir porter ces sacrifices.

Vous souvenez-vous du temps où je vous conjurais d'être vraiment Ministre, de ne consulter que votre propre instinct, votre propre jugement? Depuis trois ans vous avez usé de la plénitude de ce droit, et certes l'Europe doit bénir votre Ministère. Je répète, je suis bien contente, et même un peu fière, car vous savez les sentimens que j'ai pour vous.

In Spain, in Greece, and elsewhere, Lord Aberdeen and Guizot had to deal with subordinates who, in evading their orders, sincerely thought that they were serving their country.

In Spain, the want of cordial co-operation between the diplomatic agents of the two nations led to lasting and disastrous results. In Greece, it was the cause of much

temporary embarrassment, but had little effect on the ultimate march of events.

Those who would attribute Lord Aberdeen's rooted objection to the meddling of England in the domestic affairs of other nations to a sympathy with despotic governments, might with advantage study the attitude which he assumed towards the Greek Revolution of 1843. This was a revolution brought about by no foreign influence. The movement was spontaneous, general, and decisive, and as such would in any case have been readily accepted by Lord Aberdeen as an expression of the will of the Greek people. But this was not all. It was hailed by him as a wise and judicious step. He rejoiced to see the Greek people thus assert their right, their power, and their determination to rule their own land. He wrote to Sir Robert Peel that he had, in compliance with his wish, toned down the terms of approval which he had used in writing officially on the subject, but he added that, though he had done so,

> I think it will be desirable that we should take our ground at once in support of the Greek Revolution. I have never known a change more imperatively called for, more fully justified, or more wisely carried into effect.

Instead of allowing free play to the action of the new Constitution, the English and French Ministers at Athens distracted the little State by their intrigues and animosities; each of them adopted a favourite politician, and spared no exertion to bring him into power and to discredit his adversary. The British Minister was Sir Edmund Lyons, afterwards Lord Lyons, a gallant sailor and distinguished admiral, but no diplomatist. The French Minister was M. Piscatory, who looked more to the plaudits of the Opposition in the French Chambers than to the wishes of his own Government. The following letter from Lord Aberdeen

to Sir Edmund Lyons gives a fair idea both of his style of remonstrance with his subordinates and of the difficulties he had to encounter :

November 11, 1844.—I lament that M. Piscatory should have promoted M. Coletti's intrigue for the overthrow of Mavrocordato's Ministry. This renders future confidence between you impossible ; but you have allowed your resentment to interfere with your social relations in a very undignified and improper manner. When you make it the subject of official complaint that M. Piscatory regaled a set of idle ragamuffins with wine and fruit, and that he held up his two little children in his arms to the populace, I am surprised that you should not see that such pitiable stuff as this is not worthy of being reported.

I have prescribed in my official despatches the course which you ought now to pursue. Confidence is out of the question, and you should maintain a dignified reserve in all matters connected with the internal politics of Greece. But there ought to be no change whatever in your personal habits of courtesy and politeness. It is for the French Government to judge the conduct of M. Piscatory.

I cannot require you to approve of, or to support the Government of M. Coletti, because I by no means approve of it myself; but it will be your duty to do nothing, either directly or indirectly, to oppose it. I must repeat my positive injunction that no man shall be considered as the English candidate for office. I believe M. Mavrocordato to be a perfectly honest man, probably the most honest public man in Greece ; and I sincerely regret, for the sake of his country, that he has not been able to retain his situation as Minister. He may reasonably complain of the hostility of those from whom he had every ground to expect support. But you are to recollect that you are living in a Constitutional Government, and that M. Mavrocordato's defeat could not have happened if he had possessed a majority in the Chambers. We may lament the perverseness of the King and the blindness of the Legislature, but there is no appeal from this decision ; and it is in the Chambers only that M. Mavrocordato must take his revenge. You are to recollect that Greece is not England, and that if the King and the Chambers prefer a bad Ministry to a good one, it is their own misfortune ; but they are supreme.

I must say a word about the loss of English influence, which is a fertile topic in our newspapers. But I really do not comprehend what this means. Let M. Piscatory and M. Coletti govern Greece if they can, and in the best manner they can. Let them make Greece as French as they please, I will take good care that justice shall be done to British subjects

whenever their rights or interests are concerned. I defy them to destroy or to weaken the only influence which is worth possessing. Whether you possess the ear of the Minister or not is a matter of very little importance ; the superior probity, enterprise, and wealth of British merchants will always ensure the preservation of British influence. I desire no other than that which arises from this source, and from our upright and disinterested conduct in our relations with the Government.

But while writing thus to Sir E. Lyons, Lord Aberdeen did not conceal from M. Guizot his opinion of the conduct of M. Piscatory.

I am bound to declare (he writes) that I cannot doubt M. Piscatory's participation in the intrigue for the overthrow of Mavrocordato. This may safely be inferred from the tenour of all his correspondence with you. . . . He continues to evince the most absurd, groundless, and ridiculous suspicions of English predominance. . . . With respect to M. Coletti, who entertains the opinion that we desire to make an English Pashalick of Greece, I can only say that he does his country a great deal too much honour. Most assuredly I would not make a Pashalick of Greece, if I could ; but with the opinions expressed by M. Piscatory, I confess that I am not much surprised at the sentiments of his friend. I leave M. Coletti with his convictions. As they excite in my mind no feelings but disdain, I shall take no pains to undeceive him. Indeed, I have no complaint to make of M. Coletti ; he is only labouring in his vocation. It is very evident that from the first construction of M. Mavrocordato's ministry he has employed every means to accomplish its destruction. But in a Constitutional Government M. Coletti had a perfect right to make himself Minister if he could ; and although he had solemnly promised M. Mavrocordato his best support, this is a question of Greek morals upon which it is not necessary for me to pronounce any judgment. The only part of this transaction which gives me any real uneasiness is the evidence it affords of the improbability that our good understanding should lead to the results we both desire. . . . All those who opposed the Greek Revolution would be delighted to see Constitutional Government discredited by its failure in Greece, and you must be aware that this is a subject of hope and expectation with many at this moment. I would willingly prevent this result, and I trust that your support of M. Coletti will not extend to any such consequences. Notwithstanding our mutual confidence, and the object which above all others we have in view, it is vain to think that our desires and endeavours will produce any good unless our agents shall really act in the spirit of the instructions they may receive.

The misunderstanding at Athens was vexatious, but the jealousy of the French and English ministers in Spain involved far graver and more disastrous consequences, of which indeed the indirect results are not yet exhausted. It led to the destruction of that cordial understanding between France and England, which Lord Aberdeen and M. Guizot had with such pains laboured successfully to establish, but which, soon after Lord Aberdeen's retirement from office, was put an end to by what were known as the 'Spanish Marriages' of 1846; a misfortune, for which the discord of the agents of the two governments at Madrid was mainly responsible.

The true history of that once famous transaction is little known, and is generally altogether misrepresented and misunderstood.

Isabella II. of Spain was placed, while yet an infant, upon a throne her right of succession to which was disputed. The additional strength which a judicious alliance might give to her cause was too obvious to be overlooked, and projects for the ultimate disposal of her hand were discussed from almost the first moment of her accession.

It would be unnecessary to dwell at length on these proposals, even if the space at my command did not render it impossible. Louis Philippe had refused an offer to betroth the Queen to his son, the Duc d'Aumale; but this refusal was conditional on her marriage to some other member of the House of Bourbon, and the consequent maintenance of the succession to the Crown in that family. In 1845, on the occasion of a visit made by Queen Victoria to the Château d'Eu, an important assurance was given by the King and M. Guizot, which was thus described by Lord Aberdeen in a letter written the same evening to Sir Robert Peel:

They said that, having promised to support the pretensions of the King of Naples, they were bound not to abandon the Count de Trapani so long as there was a chance of his being successful in his suit. Both the King and Guizot said they had no objection to the Duke of Seville, and that, if it should be found that the Count de Trapani was impossible, they would willingly support him. With respect to the Infanta, they both declared in the most positive and explicit manner that, until the Queen was married and *had children*, they should consider the Infanta precisely as her sister, and that any marriage with a French Prince previously would be out of the question. The King said he did not wish that his son should have the prospect of being on the throne of Spain, but that, if the Queen had children, by whom the succession would be secured, he did not engage to preclude himself from the possibility of profiting by the great inheritance which the Infanta would bring his son.

It must be borne in mind that in thus announcing his intention to delay the proposed marriage of his son with the Infanta, Louis Philippe never abandoned, or in any way implied that he abandoned, the condition which he had attached to his renunciation of the hand of Queen Isabella for one of his own sons. That condition was, that the Crown of Spain should not pass out of the House of Bourbon, as it would do in the event of the Queen's marriage to a prince of any other family, and the succession to the throne of the children of that marriage. Lord Aberdeen deprecated this limitation as derogatory to the independence of the Spanish nation and disrespectful to the Queen of Spain. But he was quite aware that the withdrawal of the King's sons from among the candidates for the Crown matrimonial of Spain was contingent on the observance of this condition, and that, in the event of any serious prospect of a marriage of a different character, the King would hold himself perfectly free to permit the Duke of Montpensier to marry at once, not the Infanta, but the Queen herself.

The promise, therefore made by the King was really,

that the marriage of the Duke of Montpensier with the Infanta should not take place until Queen Isabella was married *to a member of the House of Bourbon*, and had children, the issue of such a marriage. The condition was repeated and laid down in writing a few months later by the French Government. In a memorandum delivered by M. de Ste. Aulaire to Lord Aberdeen, on February 27, 1846, it is explicitly declared that :

> Si le mariage, soit de la Reine, soit de l'Infante, avec le Prince Léopold de Coburg, ou avec tout autre Prince étranger aux descendans de Philippe V, devenait probable et imminent . . . dans ce cas nous serions affranchis de tout engagement, et libres d'agir immédiatement pour parer le coup, en demandant la main, soit de la Reine, soit de l'Infante, pour M. le duc de Montpensier.

Here certainly there is no concealment. The pretensions of the French Government, however arrogant, are plainly enough avowed. And if the marriage of the Queen of Spain, or of her sister, with Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg was 'probable and imminent,' the French Government must stand acquitted of any breach of faith in disregarding the conditional engagement of the Château d'Eu, however much we may, from other points of view, lament and condemn their action in departing from it.

The real question, then, so far as the accusation of breach of faith is concerned, is : 'Was the marriage of Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg with the Queen of Spain, or the Infanta Fernanda Luisa, really 'probable and imminent' in the month of August 1846?' It is, I think, impossible to deny that it was so.

The British Minister at Madrid at this time was Sir Henry Bulwer, a very able, but not over-scrupulous diplomatist. On his return to Spain in the autumn of 1845, he was enjoined to observe an entirely passive attitude of neutrality with regard to the candidature of the King of Naples

brother, the Count of Trapani, for the Queen's hand—a candidature unpopular in Spain, but warmly pressed by the French Government. This neutrality Bulwer speedily converted into active and successful opposition, and at the same time pressed on Lord Aberdeen the desirability of Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg becoming the Queen's husband. During the winter he continued to dwell on the superiority of Prince Leopold to all other candidates, and concluded one of his letters on the subject in the spring of 1846 by saying:

> I may add that *I could make the marriage* if you instructed me to do so, and that your instructions to me were kept secret.

On May 7th Lord Aberdeen replied:

> Whatever we may feel towards an amiable and deserving young Prince, nearly connected with our own Queen, we have really no political interest whatever in his success. On the contrary, I can easily conceive that it might lead to much inconvenience, notwithstanding his personal merits; for it is probable that he may be regarded by the Spanish Government as likely to receive the countenance and active support of England, if placed in the situation of the Queen's husband. Now, I have no belief whatever that such would be the case; and, even if it were, it could only lead us into the most impolitic and embarrassing engagements. As we have no English candidate, I should be sorry to see you actively engaged in the support of any other, be he who he may.

Before this letter could reach Bulwer, he had lent himself to a palace intrigue at Madrid, which resulted in the despatch of a letter from the Queen-mother Christina to the Duke of Saxe-Coburg Gotha, then at Lisbon, containing an offer of her daughter's hand to Prince Leopold, a letter certainly revised, if not dictated, by Bulwer himself. A copy of the letter was forwarded by him to Lord Aberdeen, with a sketch of the plan by which he proposed to give effect to the measure contemplated. A change of ministry was to be effected, the Cortes summoned, the Queen's marriage with Count Trapani proposed to it and rejected, marriage with

Prince Leopold then suggested, approved, and celebrated; after which the French Government was to be informed of the *fait accompli*, and the intimation softened by the offer of an immediate marriage between the Infanta and the Duke of Montpensier.

This proceeding of Bulwer's was a serious departure from the passive attitude which he had been instructed to maintain, and, what was worse, it was a secret and underhand departure from it. His action was even more strongly condemned by Sir Robert Peel than by Lord Aberdeen, who thus replied to his letter:

I think that the situation in which you have been placed with regard to the Spanish marriage is liable to two very grave objections. In the first place, I think that we shall appear to be justly liable to the imputation of joining in an intrigue, directed against the policy of France, to promote an object in which we have no real interest, and at the expense of our own good faith. Secondly, if the marriage of Prince Leopold be, in itself, at all desirable, I think your position is most unfortunate, as the success of the project could only be injured by the appearance of any English interference whatever.

I have further expressed my entire disbelief of any negotiation on the part of Prince Leopold being in progress to promote his marriage with the Queen, and have given the most positive assurances that, at all events, the English Government would take no part in such a project.

I have felt it incumbent on me, therefore, at once to inform the French Government through M. Ste. Aulaire that a communication had been made to the Duke of Saxe-Coburg on this subject, and also that you had been cognisant of such communication. I added, too, that you had acted in the matter without my instructions, and entirely without my knowledge, but that our own views and opinions had undergone no change.

This prompt explanation will remove an unpleasant impression which the French Government might have received from a knowledge of the transaction which they could not have failed very shortly to obtain. *Depend upon it, that, as you have discovered the intrigue of Bresson,*[1] *he would inevitably have discovered yours.* I have said formerly that I thought Bresson had behaved ill, and that we had not been treated in a manner we had a right to expect; but I repeat, that it is not for us to

[1] The French Ambassador at Madrid.

follow this example. I cannot help fearing that you have permitted yourself imperceptibly to be influenced in this matter by a feeling of personal resentment, which, although not unnatural, might better have been repressed.

This, then, was the situation of affairs at the time of the resignation of Sir Robert Peel in July 1846. Even before that event the French Court and Government unquestionably felt great sensitiveness and alarm as to the pretensions of Prince Leopold. Lord Aberdeen had found it scarcely possible to prevent some fresh outbreak of apprehension every month; and it was only probable that yet greater uneasiness would be felt after Lord Aberdeen's retirement.

Unfortunately, Lord Aberdeen's policy of entire openness towards the French Government, which he had felt to be the only possible mode of efficaciously disarming suspicion, was not adhered to by his successor. On the contrary, the most extreme reserve was resorted to, and instructions were sent to Bulwer, without any previous communication with the French Government, in which, without directly advocating them, the pretensions of Prince Leopold were not unfavourably spoken of.

The French Government, however, in spite of suspicion, adhered loyally to the obligation it had taken upon itself to wait for the birth of heirs to the Spanish Crown before the conclusion of the marriage of the Infanta; but a hint received by M. Guizot, that the English Government was endeavouring to effect her marriage in the meanwhile to some other Prince, induced him to authorise Count Bresson, in case of need, to declare that, so soon as the Queen's marriage was concluded, he would be ready to commence negotiations for the eventual marriage of the Duke of Montpensier with the Infanta.

The hint given to M. Guizot was not an unfounded one.

Up to this time Bulwer, when advocating the marriage of the Queen to Prince Leopold, had always coupled it with the marriage at the same time of the Duke of Montpensier to the Infanta, hoping thus to overcome, or at least diminish, the opposition of France. But a new prospect was now opened. It occurred to Lord Palmerston that the delay to which the French Government was pledged might be so taken advantage of, as to prevent the possibility of the Infanta's union at any time, under any circumstances, with the Duke of Montpensier. She might be married at once to some one else !

In a series of letters to Bulwer, Lord Palmerston urged him to effect and carry out at once the double marriage of the sisters to the Duke of Seville and Prince Leopold, leaving it a matter of comparative indifference whether the latter married the Queen or the Infanta. Extracts (at least) from these letters were given by Bulwer to Queen Christina, and by her at once shown to the French Ambassador at Madrid, Count Bresson.

It is not wonderful that the effect produced at the Tuileries by such a disclosure was electrical. What stung the French King and Royal Family far more than even the avowed advocacy of a Coburg marriage for one or other of the sisters (which, however, in itself at once restored the right of free action to France), was the discovery that the King's voluntary renunciation of all attempts to effect the Infanta's marriage to his son, until after the Queen had borne children, had been made use of to promote a scheme designed to render such a marriage at any time, and in any circumstances, altogether impossible.

That up to this time the King and M. Guizot, in spite of doubts and suspicions, had been sincere in their adherence to the declaration voluntarily made by them at Eu, is

proved by the confidential correspondence between them which accident has since given to the world.

The King and M. Guizot had in their hands evidence of Lord Palmerston's wishes, and of the imminent probability of their accomplishment, if they hesitated to *parer le coup* in the manner in which they had already announced they should, in such case, hold themselves free to do. Approval of the double marriage, arranged by Queen Christina and M. Bresson the moment that Lord Palmerston's letters were communicated to the latter, was consequently at once telegraphed (by semaphore) to Madrid.

The evidence obtained as to the proposals of Lord Palmerston was not such as could be publicly produced. The French Government was consequently obliged to seek the justification of its action in Lord Palmerston's public despatches and utterances. These, though sufficient, when coupled with a reserve contrasting harshly with the cordial intimacy of intercourse which had existed with his predecessor, to justify some suspicion, were altogether insufficient to prove such suspicion to be well founded. Read by the light of the private letters which accompanied them, we may now perceive that M. Guizot was not far wrong as to their meaning; but, without such a commentary, there is nothing to be seen in them which is inconsistent with adherence on the part of Lord Palmerston to the policy of his predecessor. Even those critics most favourable to M. Guizot considered the grounds publicly alleged by him quite inadequate to justify the abrupt breach of an engagement voluntarily undertaken. Lord Aberdeen, in writing to M. Guizot, frankly told him [1] that the correspondence on which he relied did not warrant the con-

[1] Lord Aberdeen to M. Guizot, September 14, 1846. *Revue Retrospective*, p. 324.

clusions he had drawn from it. To this Lord Aberdeen added that he was himself confident that neither directly nor indirectly had any proposition on behalf of Prince Leopold received the slightest encouragement or support from this country. Lord Aberdeen was mistaken: but his belief was that which remained for many years the belief of every one, and it has been generally accepted as one of the facts of history.

The publication by Lord Dalling of some of the letters communicated to the King of the French renders them public property, and removes all obligation of secrecy with regard to their contents. With these letters before us, it is easy to perceive how different, in truth, was the attitude of the two successive English Secretaries of State.

Lord Aberdeen enjoined the British Minister at Madrid to observe perfect neutrality, and avoid all appearance of putting forward an English candidate: Lord Palmerston eagerly adopted and pressed the candidature of Don Enrique (at the moment an impossible one). Lord Aberdeen left the question of the Infanta's marriage to be dealt with in the future: Lord Palmerston bade Bulwer '*try for*' an immediate (and apparently secret) betrothal of the Infanta to Prince Leopold. Lord Aberdeen regarded the marriage of the Queen as of comparatively small importance—a step which in the middle of the nineteenth century was little likely to influence the course of national policy: Lord Palmerston looked on the marriage of either of the daughters of Christina to a French prince 'as a plain and public declaration that both Spain and France were looking forward to a combined war against England!' Lord Aberdeen considered the marriage of the Duke of Montpensier to the Infanta as in certain conditions an event perfectly harmless, and as a step to which in no case formal diplomatic objec-

tion could be taken.[1] Lord Palmerston directed the Spanish Government to be told that it would be 'a measure of contingent hostility to England.' Lord Aberdeen maintained unreserved communication and concert with the French Government; Lord Palmerston pointedly abstained from any communication with it on the subject of the Queen's marriage. Lord Aberdeen had assured the French Ambassador that he might be 'perfectly easy' about Prince Leopold; that there was no more chance of his marrying the Queen of Spain than of Lord Aberdeen himself doing so, and that 'the English Government would take no part in such a project.' Lord Palmerston, though preferring that Don Enrique should marry the elder, and Prince Leopold the younger sister, assured the Spanish Government that he would support the marriage of the Queen to Prince Leopold, if resolved on; and ordered Bulwer to 'try for it' as 'the next best thing,' if the plan for the marriage of Don Enrique to the Queen and of Prince Leopold to the Infanta failed. Lastly, Louis Philippe having engaged for a certain time to delay the marriage of his son, it never entered into the heads of Lord Aberdeen or Sir Robert Peel to use that time in negotiations, kept secret from the French Government, for at once bestowing the hand of the Infanta on another man; nor am I inclined to think that they would have considered such negotiations consistent

[1] 'A short time ago it was universally understood and believed that the marriage of the Duc de Montpensier with the Infanta was quite settled, and would take place without delay. Had this been the case, I do not know what we could have done to prevent it. We might with good reason have been displeased with the King, but we could not really have opposed the marriage, or make any valid objection to it. Still less could we have treated it as a question of European interest, and have attempted to enlist the Great Powers in any co-operation to defeat it.'—Lord Aberdeen to Sir R. Peel, October 8, 1845. Aberdeen MSS.

with their own dignity and self-respect, or with their honourable obligations towards King Louis Philippe.

On an impartial review of the whole transaction it must, I think, be admitted—(1) that the engagement entered into at Eu was avowedly a conditional one; (2) that full and fair notice of the consequences of a breach of its conditions was given; and (3) that in August 1846 the marriage of Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg to the Queen of Spain or her sister was 'probable and imminent.' No charge of breach of faith, therefore, can justly be preferred against M. Guizot and the King. Nevertheless, the course taken by the French Government must be deplored, and may be censured. The friendship of England was worth more to Louis Philippe than the dowry of the Infanta.

To the even more serious charge that the marriage actually effected was designed to secure the succession of the Infanta to the throne, it is in itself almost a sufficient answer to reply that the choice of the Duke of Cadiz as the Queen's husband was the result of no deliberate selection on the part of Louis Philippe. On the contrary, both he and the Queen of the French had set their hearts on the marriage of Queen Isabella with the Count of Trapani, Queen Marie Amélie's nephew.

Up to the month of May 1846 this marriage was still thought possible by the French Government, and even after the hope of effecting it had been reluctantly abandoned, every passing chance which appeared to offer any possibility of reviving the plan was eagerly caught at by the French King, even up to so late a period as a month before the arrangement of the marriage which actually took place.[1]

[1] 'Je crois qu'il faut s'efforcer de relever Trapani.'—Louis Philippe to M. Guizot, July 26, 1846. *Revue Rétrospective*, p. 187.

But when the candidature of the Count of Trapani became impossible, of all the living descendants of Philip V., the two sons of Don Francisco alone remained unmarried and in a position enabling them to pretend to the Queen's hand; and of these two, the rash folly of the Duke of Seville rendered the Duke of Cadiz the only available candidate.

It is unfair to attribute to the deeply-laid machinations of the King and M. Guizot a result due mainly to Bulwer's opposition in one case, and to Don Enrique's folly in another. It is equally unfair to assume that a candidate, whose pretensions were only seriously entertained at the last moment, and whose success involved the disappointment of the cherished wishes of the French Royal Family with regard to the Count of Trapani, was the candidate whom the King and Guizot had all along marked out as the man of their choice.

In the autumn of 1844 Louis Philippe, accompanied by M. Guizot, returned at Windsor a visit which the Queen had paid him in the previous year at the Château d'Eu. During that visit Lord Aberdeen and M. Guizot were in constant intercourse, and from that time it is not too much to say, as Mr. Walpole has done in his 'History of England,' that they were 'not friends but colleagues.' Each was in the habit of showing to the other not merely the official despatches which he addressed to his subordinates, but also the private letters by which they were accompanied. Each consulted the other's wishes and susceptibilities as far as possible, and I fully believe that this was quite as largely and as sincerely done by M. Guizot as by Lord Aberdeen.

Lord Aberdeen had his way with regard to the French alliance, but his difficulties were neither few nor small.

Public opinion in England remained hostile to France, jealous of her position, and suspicious of her acts. Not only did the Opposition clamour, as every Opposition has clamoured, as to the undue deference shown to a foreign power, but even Lord Aberdeen's own colleagues were full of distrust. Suspicions which from the first had been expressed by the Duke of Wellington, to whom friendship with France, if not distasteful, at least seemed unnatural, extended to other members of the Government. Sir Robert Peel and Sir James Graham invariably put the worst construction on every act of the French Government, and sought to find in it evidence of covert hostility. Before his death, Sir Robert Peel did full justice to Guizot; and Sir James Graham, in later years, regretted and smiled at the groundless fears with which he had disturbed Lord Aberdeen's course. But this was long after the period of which I am now treating. Neither Peel nor Graham had that power of putting himself in another's place, and seeing matters with another's eyes, which Lord Aberdeen instinctively possessed. Each would in words have admitted that the first duty of every Minister was that which he owed to his own country, but they habitually reasoned as though the interests of England ought to be the first consideration, not only with English statesmen, but with those of foreign countries also, and that we were entitled to consider ourselves wronged when this was not the case.

Lord Aberdeen saw with alarm the growing divergence of opinion between himself and other members of the Cabinet on the subject of our relations with France; and on September 28, 1845, he wrote as follows to Sir Robert Peel:

Graham has assured me that his own views, with respect to our relations with France, have recently undergone an entire change; and such, I perceive, is also the case with yourself.

A policy of friendship and confidence has been converted into a policy of hostility and distrust.

This change will, of course, justify and call for a corresponding change in the character of the measures adopted by us; and although, from the prudence and caution with which you will act, it is possible that I may feel no great objection to these measures when proposed, I cannot too strongly express my dissent from the spirit and motives by which they will have been suggested. It is my deliberate and firm conviction that there is less reason to distrust the French Government, and to doubt the continuance of peace, at the present moment, than there was four years ago, when your administration was first formed; and I cannot perceive the slightest ground for any change in the policy which at that time it was thought wise to pursue. I fully admit that, in spite of all calculation, it is possible that war may suddenly, and when least expected, take place. It is also certain that, sooner or later, this calamity must fall upon us. Every reasonable degree of preparation, therefore, for such a contingency is justifiable, and even necessary; but the character of the measures adopted will, of course, depend upon the greater or less amount of apprehension under which we act. For my own part, I would never for an instant forget the possibility of war, and would make all reasonable provision accordingly; but I would continue to live under the conviction of the greater probability of peace.

It seems to me that we are now acting under the influence of a panic, both with respect to the intentions of France and our own real condition, and that such a course of conduct has a direct tendency to produce the very evil which it is intended to avert.

The preparation of our 'advanced ships' has not quite the same character; and I am informed that there has been more activity in this respect during the last six months than for the three preceding years. If it be true, as I have been told, that the ships have *actually got their water on board*, I should be disposed to regard it as the evidence of childish restlessness; but our neighbours may draw other inferences, and give us credit for more serious intentions than we probably entertain.

A suggestion has lately been made to me from the Admiralty respecting the recall of the *Penelope* and one or two other steamers from the coast of Africa. If it be intended to substitute other steam vessels of less size and more speed, there can be no objection; but you must be aware that I could not agree to interfere with the success of the great experiment which is now in progress in that part of the world, without a little more evidence of danger at home than I have hitherto been able to perceive.

I have said, however, that it is not very likely that measures should be proposed in which it would be impossible for me to concur; but whether this be the case or not, the spirit and feeling with respect to France are so different from mine, and everything is looked at in such a different point of view, that it is difficult not to anticipate some unpleasant consequences.

A trifling matter of recent occurrence will explain how extensively, and in what manner, this difference of feeling operates. The visit of the Prince de Joinville to examine the injuries sustained by the new floating breakwater at Brighton, and of which as a scientific work he spoke to me with much interest, appeared to me to be not only innocent but laudable. I find, however, that this visit is considered here as an event of political importance, and a serious offence on the part of the Prince!

Under all the circumstances to which I have referred, and the apprehensions I entertain, it is my belief that it will be the safest course for you to allow me now to retire from the Government. No difference as yet has taken place, and none whatever is expected. It is well known to my friends and connections that office is not only irksome to me, but that considerations of health have more than once pretty urgently called for this proceeding. No other motive will be assigned, and it will be the more easy to sanction this, as I have no wish ever to enter the House of Lords again.

I am very sensible that this change would expose you to some inconvenience; and I do not deny that at the present moment, from various causes, it is probable that there may be no person altogether so acceptable to the Great Powers of Europe as myself. But this is merely temporary, and I can contemplate more than one mode of arrangement which would leave you little reason to complain. At all events, the danger of any difference of opinion would be removed, which, if it should unfortunately occur, could scarcely fail to lead to the most serious mischief.

Sir Robert replied that whatever motive Lord Aberdeen might assign for his resignation, the real reason would assuredly leak out, and that with the most disastrous results; that as Minister of Foreign Affairs he could not be replaced; and that, even if these objections to his resignation did not exist, the personal loss to himself would be 'irreparable;' adding a postscript to the letter in terms of affection such as he seldom used.

Lord Aberdeen remained in office, and from this time the alarmists in the Cabinet at least held their peace, but Lord Aberdeen was by no means easy as to the effects which might be produced by their sentiments. In sending for Peel's perusal a letter which he had received from M. Guizot, he had said that he was glad to perceive that Guizot agreed with him in the opinion which he had long entertained and frequently expressed, that the old maxim of preparing for war in order to preserve peace was entirely inapplicable to the condition of Great Powers, and to the political system of modern times, and the present state of society.

The nature of Peel's reply will be perceived from Lord Aberdeen's rejoinder:

> I fully subscribe to the general truth of your description of the past and present state of France, and of the French people and Government; but was not all this well known four years ago? France then, as now, had an army of 350,000 men, the fortifications of Paris were then in progress, and revolutionary changes of every kind had already taken place. Nevertheless we thought it possible not only to remain at peace with France, but to live and act with her in the spirit of peace and friendship. Our policy is now changed, and every newspaper is filled with the account of our hostile preparations. We still talk of peace, having war in our hearts. I confess that I regret this recent and great change, for which I see no good reason; and I regret it the more, and indeed chiefly, because it is but too probable that it may lead to the very consequences we most desire to avoid. I trust the chance of war is still very remote, but I am by no means of opinion that it is more so now than it was three months ago.
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> I do not conceive the possibility of our intercourse with foreign Powers being at all practically affected by the state of our preparations. If a knowledge of the wealth, activity, patriotism, and courage of the people cannot give us all the confidence we need on such occasions, it is not more batteries and guns in position, or ships of war more or less advanced, that will do it.

But if, with the exceptions mentioned, no question arose during Lord Aberdeen's ministry to disturb the serenity

of the relations existing between Great Britain and other European Powers, it was otherwise in the Western Hemisphere. On his accession to office, Lord Aberdeen found the relations between the United States and England in a very critical condition. One cause of peril was removed by the acquittal of M'Leod, an English subject, who had been arrested and tried for murder on account of the share he had taken in the capture and destruction of the steamer *Caroline* during the Canadian rebellion of 1838, and whose execution it would have been impossible not to resent in a manner which would certainly have involved the two countries in war. But the irritation caused by this incident rendered the existence of other matters in dispute more dangerous and their discussion more difficult. The long-standing difference as to the North-East Boundary between the United States and the British Provinces might at any time, through some quarrel between English and American settlers on the spot, bring the two nations into an attitude of active hostility from which neither could recede. So, too, the right of visiting vessels on the high seas to ascertain their nationality, assumed by cruisers engaged in the suppression of the Slave Trade, and which formed the subject of some of Lord Aberdeen's earliest and ablest papers after his return to office, might at any moment lead to a collision which, in the existing temper of the two countries, could only end in war. To add to the embarrassment of the situation, the British Minister in Washington, though not without ability, was not only one of the most indolent of men, spending the greater part of his time in bed, but had rendered himself socially unpopular in the highest degree. In these circumstances Lord Aberdeen determined to send a special mission to America, and entrusted it to Lord Ashburton, who, as the head of the

great house of Baring, was nearly as much interested in the peace and prosperity of the United States as in that of Great Britain. He did his work well, and removed all danger of war by the agreement he made with the Government of the United States as to the suppression of the Slave Trade, and the compromise by which the disputed territory on the north-eastern frontier was divided. That compromise was bitterly attacked by Lord Palmerston, but without much popular effect, for it was generally felt that any obstinate insistence on all to which England had a claim must inevitably have led to war, and that peace was well worth purchasing at the price of a tract of barren pine swamp. The attack was felt to be one made for party purposes, and would have been yet more fully recognised as such had it been generally known that the compromise adopted was substantially one which Lord Palmerston himself had ten years previously suggested.

The serious character of the questions involved in the settlement of the North-East Boundary threw all other boundary disputes into the shade. There were, however, two others—one of trivial importance, relating to the boundary immediately to the west of Lake Superior, which was easily settled by Lord Ashburton ; and a second, of far more consequence, as to the possession of the region watered by the Columbia River. But this question, which was involved in a good deal of difficulty, and the settlement of which required investigation and research, did not at that time cause any irritation, and was not regarded as a source of danger to the relations of the two countries. It would have taken time to settle it, and Lord Ashburton was eager to return to England before the autumnal gales made the passage of the Atlantic formidable to a landsman. He therefore left the negotiation to be carried on through the

ordinary channels of diplomatic intercourse—an unfortunate resolution; for had he remained, he would almost certainly have settled the dispute on terms more favourable than those ultimately agreed on, and would have saved the irritation of the following years, which in 1845 led the two countries to the brink of war. The country, which in 1842 was an empty waste, had, three years later, become the resort of settlers. An offer made by Lord Aberdeen to refer the questions in dispute to arbitration was refused by the United States; and President Polk, in a message to the Congress, not only claimed the whole of the debatable territory as belonging to the United States, whose rights to it were, he said, 'clear and unquestionable,' but threatened to take active measures to give effect to this exclusive claim. This would have been equivalent to hostilities with England. 'We too, my lords,' exclaimed Lord Aberdeen amid the cheers of the House of Lords, 'have rights which are "clear and unquestionable," and these rights, with the blessing of God and your support, we are fully prepared to maintain.' But while ready to fight rather than yield to pretentions wholly unreasonable, Lord Aberdeen was equally determined to make a last effort to avert the incalculable evils of war. He prepared a scheme of reasonable compromise, which was at the same time in fact, though not in form, an ultimatum. As such, it was purposely framed in the most liberal spirit.

I am not disposed (he wrote) to weigh very minutely the precise amount of compensation or equivalents which may be received by either party in the course of this negotiation, but am content to leave such estimate to be made by a reference to higher considerations than the mere balance of territorial loss or gain. We have sought peace in the spirit of peace; and we have acted in the persuasion that it would be cheaply purchased by both countries at the expense of any sacrifice which should not tarnish the honour or affect the essential interests of either.

The proposed convention was accepted and signed by the American Government, and ratified by the Senate, without the alteration of a single word. Lord Aberdeen was assured by Mr. Pakenham, the English Minister at Washington, by the United States Minister in London, and by Mr. Everett and other friends in the United States, that this ready acquiescence was mainly due to the apprehension that Lord Aberdeen was about to be replaced at the Foreign Office by a statesman, discussion with whom, it was believed, would make it difficult to maintain friendly relations between the two countries. It was anticipated that Lord Palmerston would not offer, or accept, similar terms, although the hope of peace depended on their being such as could be safely presented to the American people ; while it was urged that, even if he did so, it would be in a tone and manner likely to excite such irritation as would render their acceptance in the United States all but impracticable.

The treaty was ratified by the Senate as drafted by Lord Aberdeen, and against its provisions no murmur of objection was ever raised. He was able to announce its conclusion in the House of Lords on the same day that the resignation of Sir Robert Peel's Government was communicated to it.

Of the gravity of these questions all the world is cognisant, but few are aware how seriously the relations between the United States and England were imperilled by their mutual attitude towards a state, the ephemeral existence of which as an independent Republic has well-nigh been forgotten.

About 1839 the territory of the Mexican Republic was invaded by bands of American citizens, who, establishing themselves in the fertile plains between the Rio Colorado and the Rio Bravo del Norte, assumed the sovereignty of

the territory they occupied, and successfully resisted the efforts of the Mexican Government to expel them. They formed, under the name of Texas, an independent Republic, of which they established the capital at Austin, and the port of which, Galveston, soon assumed considerable importance.

It was clear enough that, if Mexico persisted in trying to subjugate the infant state, Texas would seek and would receive protection and support from the United States, and that a collision between Mexico and the United States would thus occur, in which, if unassisted, the former must necessarily be worsted. The like result would ensue if Texas sought admission into the United States, and its absorption into them was permitted by the Cabinet at Washington before its independence was recognised by Mexico. The independence of Texas had been acknowledged by the United States, by France, and by England; but the two latter powers were by no means desirous either to see Texas annexed to the United States or the power of the great northern Republic extended over Mexico, as it would be by a successful war. They therefore took every possible step to induce the Mexican Government to recognise the independence of Texas, but in vain. Meanwhile, although annexation was in some quarters desired, a majority of the Texan people desired to maintain the independence they had acquired. Missions were despatched from Texas to England and France to secure the support of these Powers. Their goodwill was easily obtained; but the recognition of Texas by Mexico, and the signature of a treaty pledging Texas to maintain its independence, were insisted on as preliminaries to any more substantial aid. The latter condition was readily complied with, but no efforts on the part of the English and French Ministers were sufficient to induce the

Mexican Government to admit the independence of Texas, and it is not impossible that we may have to thank the obstinacy of Mexico for having averted war between the United States and England. When, somewhat later, in consequence of the annexation of Texas, war between Mexico and the United States became imminent, the Mexican Government offered practically to cede the province of California, which it could not defend, to Great Britain. This was to be effected by the grant of exclusive privileges to British subjects and settlers, amounting to a virtual cession. Lord Ellenborough, then at the Admiralty, strongly urged on Lord Aberdeen the advantages to be gained from the acquisition of the site of what is now San Francisco.

> Look at the chart (he wrote); you will see that it is not only the finest harbour, but the most easily defended, really unattackable from the land side, and therefore as good as an island, while towards the sea it has facilities of defence which are hardly to be found anywhere, unless at Malta and Corfu. When we are about it, let us obtain possession, while we can, of the key of the north-west coast of America.

Nor was Sir Robert Peel wholly undazzled by the prospect. Lord Aberdeen, however, maintained that although, had the interest already existed, it would be right to maintain it, its establishment at such a moment, and in such a manner, would be little less hostile than a declaration by England and France that they would not permit the conquest of California, which would virtually be a declaration of war against the United States. But even this he would prefer to the creation of an unreal interest for political purposes. The grant might create a very pretty quarrel, but no amount of privileges bestowed by Mexico would suffice to keep out American settlers, who would probably be too powerful for the English. But, above all, while the Oregon question was still capable of a peaceful settlement, he depre-

cated a measure which would practically render such a settlement impossible. Should the negotiation respecting it end in war, the offers of Mexico should be at once accepted, and the active co-operation of Mexican troops on the south-west frontier of the United States encouraged as a formidable diversion of the American forces. It is curious now to speculate on what might have been the possible results of the establishment of British authority over San Francisco.

Speculation as to what might have been, had Lord Aberdeen's action been different from what it was with regard to another matter in the Western Hemisphere, is also suggested by the fact that, after his escape from Ham, Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte wrote to Lord Aberdeen that he had received offers of a species of dictatorship in Venezuela, and that his acceptance or refusal of the proposal would depend upon the support which his enterprise would receive from the British Government. Lord Aberdeen at that time only saw in the future Emperor the adventurer of Strasburg and Boulogne, and discouraged the idea. Ten years later he regretted that he had done so.

It was not only in North America that English diplomacy had difficulties to encounter. In South America also the British Cabinet deemed it requisite to assert itself in a peremptory manner, and to adopt very decided action. The treaty with Brazil, concluded for a term of years, by virtue of which Brazilian vessels engaged in the Slave Trade were made liable to seizure by British cruisers, having expired without renewal, Lord Aberdeen introduced, and persuaded the British Parliament to adopt, an Act authorising the naval forces engaged in the suppression of the Slave Trade to continue to proceed in exactly the same manner as if the treaty had remained in force—a high-handed measure which

it is not easy to justify, and the proposal of which in the present day would be impossible.

In the River Plate, an attempt to impose the joint mediation of France, England, and Brazil on the Republics of Buenos Ayres and Monte Video led to serious hostilities, and to a series of transactions which, as illustrating the character of Lord Aberdeen, possess considerable interest, but on which it is impossible to dwell in these pages.

I have rapidly touched on some of the most important events connected with Lord Aberdeen's second tenure of the Foreign Office, but I must not omit some notice of matters affecting himself personally rather than any public interest.

He gained in a high degree the favour and confidence of the Queen and Prince Albert, and in 1844 he was offered by them the house at Bagshot now occupied by the Duke of Connaught. This he declined, but in the following year he accepted the Ranger's House at Blackheath, which he occasionally inhabited himself, and which became during the rest of his life the habitual residence of Lord and Lady Haddo and their family.

When in the autumn of 1845 several members of the Cabinet expressed their dissent from Sir Robert Peel's proposal to repeal the Corn Laws, he appealed to Lord Aberdeen, who astonished his colleagues, as he afterwards did the House of Lords, by at once saying that he had long considered the Corn Laws logically indefensible, and had only supported them because he supposed their abolition impossible. Sir James Graham and Sidney Herbert followed in a similar sense, but Lord Aberdeen was the first who expressed assent to Sir Robert Peel's proposal.

The friendship already shown and the confidence reposed in Lord Aberdeen by Peel could hardly be exceeded; but if

possible they were now increased, and the absolute control of all foreign affairs was more unreservedly and more completely than ever left in his hands.

As is well known, the failure of the attempt of Lord John Russell to form a Government on Sir Robert Peel's resignation in 1845 was due to Lord Grey's refusal to sit in a cabinet in which Lord Palmerston would have held the seals of the Foreign Office—a refusal based on the antipathy with which Lord Palmerston was regarded by all foreign courts, and especially by that of France. Lord Palmerston, therefore, with an eye to the future, thought it prudent in the spring of 1846 to visit Paris, and attempt to dissipate the prepossessions existing against him there. Although his success there was by no means such as would be gathered from the pages of his biographers, it was still considerable. To Lord Aberdeen, whose chief political interest was the maintenance of the *entente cordiale* between the two countries, nothing could be more agreeable than the knowledge that one of the greatest dangers to its continuance was, if not removed, at all events materially abated.

> It would have been a poor compliment to me (he wrote to M. Guizot on May 5), had you sent back Lord Palmerston discontented and affronted; and, in truth, no one would have regretted it more than I should have done, from the manner in which it might have affected our future relations. I have never desired to injure Lord Palmerston; on the contrary, at the time of our ministerial crisis in December, I endeavoured by every means in my power to smooth his advent to office. Party men, or mere politicians, will not understand this conduct, and I doubt if Lord Palmerston comprehends it himself; but you will have no such difficulty.

About a month later the end came, and Lord Aberdeen wrote to announce his fall to M. Guizot and Madame de Lieven. The replies of both are characteristic.

Madame de Lieven wrote :

Juillet 15, 1846.—Je suis pleine de tristesse et en même temps d'orgueil pour vous. Jamais ministère n'a quitté les affaires sous des auspices plus magnifiques, plus glorieux.—A l'intérieur, à l'extérieur, les plus grands succès. C'est dramatique ; c'est superbe, mais je recommence ;—c'est triste.

M. Guizot's farewell was as follows :

Il faut donc enfin que je vous écrive pour vous dire adieu. Je n'espérais pas, et pourtant j'attendais. C'est pour moi un si vif déplaisir, un regret si profond ! On ne se résigne qu'à la dernière extrémité. Vous sortez bien glorieusement. J'ai appris votre bonne fortune de l'Orégon avec la même joie que si elle m'eût concerné personnellement ; vos succès étaient mes succès. Vous partirez probablement bientôt pour Haddo ; moi je pars dans quelques jours pour le Val-Richer. Que ne pouvons-nous mettre en commun notre repos, comme nous avons mis en commun notre travail ? Mais on arrange si peu sa vie comme on voudrait ! on jouit si peu de ses amis ! On se rencontre, on s'entrevoit un moment. Puis on se sépare, et chacun va de son côté, emportant des souvenirs doux qui deviennent bientôt de tristes regrets.

The resignation of Lord Aberdeen was lamented throughout Europe ; for, while vigilant in the maintenance of English interests, he had ever shown studious respect to the national pride and sensitiveness of other countries—often strong in States materially weak. He exacted, sternly enough, reparation for wrongs done, and insisted on the acknowledgment of rights belonging to Great Britain ; but he abstained from lecturing foreign statesmen on the conduct of their internal policy. That, he deemed, was best judged by themselves and those over whom they ruled. Where there was courage to demand, and power to maintain reforms, he believed they would soon be adopted. Where they did not exist, he had little faith in the utility or permanence of changes effected through foreign influence.

CHAPTER VIII

1846–1853

Lord Aberdeen at home—Language as to the Spanish Marriages—Disapproval of Lord Palmerston's Policy—Death of Sir Robert Peel—Ecclesiastical Titles Bill—Asked to form a Government, but declines—Neapolitan Letters—Attitude after the Fall of Lord John Russell's Government—Becomes Prime Minister.

SHORTLY after his resignation Lord Aberdeen went down to Haddo, and there remained till recalled to London by the reassembling of Parliament in February 1847. For the six following years also he spent in Scotland the whole period between the close of one session and the commencement of the next, and this part of the year was certainly that which he passed most agreeably to himself. The 'vie de grand seigneur de province' which he there led has already been sketched by M. de Jarnac, in his excellent article on Lord Aberdeen in the 'Revue des Deux Mondes' for August 1862, and by M. Guizot in his letters to his family; but my task would be ill performed if I were to leave unnoticed so characteristic and considerable a portion of his life. His habits were as regular and methodical as his tastes were simple. Rising early, he invariably took a short walk, accompanied by one of his sons, before meeting his family and guests at breakfast, from which meal, however large the party, the attendance of servants was rigorously excluded, as it was also from luncheon. After breakfast he wrote in

his own room till the departure of the post. He then saw his bailiff, who presented him with a 'Daily State' of the labourers employed in the house, farm, gardens, and grounds, often exceeding one hundred in number, and received his orders for the day. As twelve o'clock struck, he descended the broad flight of steps which led from the drawing-room to the terrace. The head gardener, who was standing ready at the foot of the steps, accompanied him round the terrace and garden. At the end of the short lime avenue with which the long walk leading to the lake begins, the head forester awaited him. They went together through some portion of the plantations, instructions as to the thinning of which were given, the construction of new walks was planned, and other projected improvements discussed. On Saturdays this routine was varied. On that morning, at noon, Lord Aberdeen appeared, not on the drawing-room steps, but on the corresponding flight on the opposite side of the house, and there received all who wished to speak to him on business, to complain of any grievance, to ask advice, or to give information. He spoke to each separately, and took notes of what was said. This species of 'sitting in the gate'—a survival, I presume, of the days of the heritable administration of justice—was not uncommon among great Scottish landlords in the eighteenth century. The Duchess Countess of Sutherland and Lord Aberdeen were, I believe, the last to practise it. It must be remembered that at that time the burdens and duties which fell upon a proprietor of great estates in Scotland were, and indeed to a large extent still are, much more considerable than those of an English landlord. Almost all public works, the making of roads, the building of bridges, the building and maintenance of churches, schools, and manses, the relief of the poor, and many other matters, were

determined on by the 'heritors' of the parish, and executed at their expense. But when a single man was, as was often the case, 'sole heritor' in many parishes, the whole power of determination lay with him, and the whole burden of cost fell on him. He had therefore great power and great responsibility, and became the referee and arbiter of many matters which would in England have been settled by the Petty Sessions, the Poor Law Guardians, the Vestry, and other local authorities.

These Saturday morning levees were therefore never without attendants, but on the first Saturday after Lord Aberdeen's return from England there was always a specially large assembly; and to the demand on what business they came, the reply that they had no business, but wished to see his face again, was not uncommon. The custom had its value, but for some years before his death Lord Aberdeen abandoned it; partly to avoid fatigue, but chiefly as being no longer necessary, and inconsistent with modern usages. A practice most useful when comparatively few could write, ceased to be so when every one could express himself with facility in writing.

Lord Aberdeen's favourite amusement in the afternoon was driving himself in a light pony carriage. His fast-trotting ponies carried him over a great extent of ground in a very short time, and he was thus enabled to visit works in progress at a considerable distance, or to wander for some hours, as he often did, in the picturesque valley of Formartine, now realising the expectation he had formed of its future beauty more than twenty years before.

On Sundays the parish church was duly visited. There was but one service, at midday, in consideration of the great distance from which many of the congregation came. A long array of vehicles conveyed the whole household,

servants and masters, from the house to the church, and as the huge lumbering old coach, holding six inside, with which the procession closed, was seen to round a certain corner on the road, the minister, in his Geneva gown and bands, emerged from the back door of the 'manse,' and crossed the village green to the church; *round* and not *in*, which, according to immemorial custom, the congregation, whatever the weather, was assembled. Lord Aberdeen and his family climbed the steep flight of rough stone steps, external to the building, which led to their seat, and the congregation poured into the church; while the minister, sidling with difficulty past the old women, arrayed in red or clay-coloured cloaks, and high stiff white 'mutches,' who by right of deafness sat upon the pulpit stairs, made his way to that eminence, hung up his hat on a peg therein, and proceeded to read the metrical psalm with which the service commenced, and which was sung sitting. The roar of many hundred voices, every one of which joined in contributing to the volume of sound, unaccompanied by any instrument, was solemn and imposing, notwithstanding the want of harmony;—far more solemn than the performance of the bonneted and beribboned 'choir,' to the accompaniment of an American organ out of tune, which does duty for congregational singing in so many Scottish Presbyterian churches of the present day. At the close of the service, the minister, after pronouncing with extended arms the final blessing, turned to the 'loft,' in which 'my lord' was seated, and made a low bow, which was returned with equal gravity and depth of obeisance by his lordship standing. In the afternoon a solemn walk of the whole family and guests was taken to the top of a hill in the deer park, round the lakes, and to the kitchen garden. After dinner, the day was concluded by the assembly of the whole household in the

library for prayers. These consisted of a series of prayers written by Lord Aberdeen himself, and of great beauty.

In 1840 Lord Aberdeen had built a small house at Buchan Ness, a promontory on the sea-coast about twenty miles from Haddo, and the most eastern point of Scotland. There he delighted to go for a few days at a time. It is a wild and striking spot. The granite cliffs, torn and rent by countless narrow fiords and gullies, descend abruptly into deep water, in every variety of form and colour No tree is to be found on that desolate coast, but the tints of the rocks themselves, and of the lichens which encrust them, prevent the eye from greatly missing arboreal vegetation. In one of the numberless ravines which indent the coast, Lord Aberdeen formed a garden descending in a series of terraces to the sea. It was divided at the bottom by a 'stack' of bright red granite, which rose abruptly in the centre of the ravine. The effect of this combination, when the terrace beds were gay with many coloured flowers, was singularly lovely.

The fishing population of the adjoining village, Scandinavian in origin, peculiar in their habits, and picturesque in their appearance, had a special attraction for Lord Aberdeen, and under his care the village, without losing much of its picturesque beauty, became a model of neatness and cleanliness—virtues not often cultivated in Scottish fishing villages. The women were accustomed to spend much time in watching the departure of their husbands and sons at night for the fishing, and in looking for their return in the morning. For their accommodation, Lord Aberdeen put up, in a sheltered nook overlooking the little harbour, a number of granite seats, and nothing pleased him better than to see them well filled. At the same spot he caused a large barometer to be inserted under glass in an upright slab of

red granite, so that it might be easily consulted by the fishermen; and to its warnings the Boddam herring fleet more than once owed its escape from dangers which proved fatal to boats belonging to other villages on the coast.

Whilst at Haddo he was always surrounded by the greater part of his family; his brothers, his sons and daughters-in-law, his stepchildren and their families, and his grandchildren. There were generally also a few guests of greater or less distinction in the house,—former colleagues, friends from the great outer world, or county neighbours to whom the Lord Lieutenant desired to show civility. During the six months spent at Haddo he hardly ever left it, or paid visits elsewhere.

I have thought it worth while to be thus minute in my account of the habits of life followed by Lord Aberdeen at home, not only because some account of them is material to a right understanding of the man, but because the style of life described is one which, in its mingled simplicity and stateliness, has now wholly disappeared. The almost ostentatious absence of display, and the care with which any outward assertion or symbol of rank or wealth was avoided, contrast strangely with the luxury and show of nearly all great houses of the present day. On the other hand, the deference, unexpressed, but felt and tacitly shown, which formed the basis of this life, is now unknown. Lord Aberdeen's daughter-in-law, the present Countess Dowager, writes thus of those days

> There was a formality and stiffness which even then struck most strangers, and would now do so still more, and which gave rather the impression of a little court with a somewhat rigid etiquette. The admirals[1] read their papers in the anteroom, the younger ones talked in an undertone in a corner, while the rest of us either conversed inaudibly, or waited in silence for his lordship to begin before we spoke to him.

[1] Lord Aberdeen's brothers.

'His lordship':—the very fact that even in familiar intercourse he was never spoken of by any other name by those who loved him best, itself shows something of this formality. Even at the time, that stiffness was felt to be a 'survival;' and it was often said by the younger members of the family, that it only needed the guard of halberdiers to make the formal Sunday walk an exact counterpart of the Duc de Sully's solemn family promenades.

But though Lord Aberdeen spent so large a portion of his time each year in strict retirement at Haddo, and took no very active part in public life when in London, he now held a position in the State which made entire abstinence from political action on his part, even when at home, impossible. Almost immediately after his resignation he was induced to preside at a meeting of the Agricultural Society of the four north-eastern counties of Scotland. In spite of his Free Trade views, the personal respect felt for him, and his position, ensured him a hearty welcome from the assembled lairds and farmers, strong Protectionists though the great majority of them were; and he took advantage of the opportunity to deliver to them an uncompromising Free Trade speech, which was well received.

On all domestic questions he gave a steady support to the Government of Lord John Russell, but he entertained, and frequently expressed, the strongest disapproval of the policy which, under the guidance of Lord Palmerston, that Government pursued in its dealings with foreign affairs.

I have in another chapter told the true story of the famous Spanish marriages, which were arranged within three months of Lord Aberdeen quitting the Foreign Office. He did not at the time know how widely Lord Palmerston had departed from the course which he had himself taken with

reference to that matter, and did not believe that any such departure had taken place. But though he considered the French Government to have acted hastily and unjustifiably, he entertained not the slightest doubt of its good faith, and was above all things desirous that the action of the two Governments in concert, which had been attended with such numerous advantages, should not be interrupted. In reply to denunciations of the King and his Minister which Lord Aberdeen received from Prince Albert, he wrote :

> I will venture to observe that a good understanding with France is just as necessary now as it was at the moment when the *entente* was most cordial and intimate. This marriage is not an adequate cause of national quarrel, and whatever may be the private and personal feelings necessarily produced by what has taken place, I am satisfied that the Queen is too magnanimous to give way to undue resentment, and too wise to desire to deviate from a policy of forbearance and peace.

And, the Prince having resumed the subject in a subsequent letter, Lord Aberdeen replied :

> The marriage of the Duc de Montpensier is really an affair of little importance to England, and it is an event with which in itself we have no right to quarrel. It derives its present objectionable character entirely from the breach of the engagement at Eu, which for my own part, and for the sake of both countries, I heartily wish had never been entered into at all. As matters now stand, the *entente* as it formerly existed must be at an end. The Queen has expressed her feelings upon the whole transaction in a manner the most dignified and convincing ; and I only venture to hope that these feelings of displeasure will never degenerate into active hostility.

He wrote in the same tone to Peel, to Sir James Graham, and to Guizot himself, and, when he heard that there was an intention to protest against the marriage of the Duc de Montpensier as a violation of the Treaty of Utrecht, he exerted himself to show very fully the unreasonableness of such a course. He had no difficulty in shivering to pieces the argument on which the protest was founded, and I much

regret that space does not permit me to give some quotations from writings which are admirable examples of close reasoning and conclusive argument. Their main points were afterwards published in an article in the 'Quarterly Review.'

The French Revolution of 1848 of course profoundly affected Lord Aberdeen. M. Guizot and his family were, on reaching England, pressed to take up their abode at Argyll House, but for many reasons M. Guizot preferred to establish himself in a house of his own at Brompton. He, however, saw Lord Aberdeen almost every day, and their friendship became more than ever close and intimate.

During the next two sessions Lord Aberdeen continued to protest against the policy of Lord Palmerston, which reached its culminating point in the discreditable bullying to which, in 1850, the Greek Government was subjected on account of the claims of Don Pacifico. We now know that Lord John Russell and a majority of the Cabinet did not entertain any very different opinion of Lord Palmerston's policy from that held by Lord Aberdeen. It was unfortunate that no inkling of the resolution at which Lord John Russell had arrived, to deprive Lord Palmerston of the seals of the Foreign Office, had reached Sir Robert Peel and Lord Aberdeen. Had it done so, the famous Pacifico debate, which forced Lord John to undertake the defence of a colleague he had already determined to dismiss, and gave Lord Palmerston more than another year of office, would never have been raised; whilst on the retirement of Lord Palmerston the union of the friends of Sir Robert Peel with the great bulk of the Liberal party would have been effected earlier than it actually was, and without the friction to which by that time their relations had been subjected. Such an union, in 1850, would almost certainly have saved Lord

John from the great error of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, and might not improbably have averted the Crimean War.

The needful knowledge was, however, wanting; and even Sir Robert Peel, friendly as were his feelings to the Government, and greatly as he dreaded its overthrow, felt compelled, even at this risk, to denounce a policy which he regarded as not only indefensible but dangerous. But the *Civis Romanus sum* argument was popular with the House of Commons and the public. Beaten by a large majority in the House of Lords, the Government obtained a more than compensating majority in the House of Commons, and Lord Palmerston became for a time its most popular member.

In the afternoon of the day on which this vote was given, Sir Robert Peel met with the accident which in a few days caused his death.

The shock felt by Lord Aberdeen at the loss of his perhaps closest friend was very great, and all the greater from the mask of coldness which he so successfully assumed, as to hide from all but those few who knew him best the depth to which he was affected. The day before Sir Robert Peel died Lord Aberdeen was at Blackheath. He stood on the rug and spoke of indifferent matters. 'Why does grandpapa stand so very still to-day?' asked the children. Their mother well knew, and was not surprised to hear that at night he was attacked by violent spasms, the physical reaction of the effort to suppress all outward emotion.

The death of Sir Robert Peel forced upon Lord Aberdeen a prominence which he would gladly have avoided. He became, by the spontaneous action of every member of what was called the Peelite party, its recognised leader and head. That this party, small though it was, owed its continued existence to the bonds of similarity of opinion and

principle, and not to the mere accident of personal connection, was curiously proved in the winter of the same year, when, without any previous communication or knowledge of each other's sentiments, Lord Aberdeen, Sir James Graham, the Duke of Newcastle, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Sidney Herbert, each came independently to the conclusion that the line taken by Lord John Russell in meeting what was called Papal aggression, and in which he was supported by the vast majority of the nation, was one inconsistent with the true principles of religious liberty, and must be firmly opposed, at whatever sacrifice of popularity, and at the cost of a breach with a Government with which they were, on the whole, in sympathy.

The Ecclesiastical Titles Act of 1851 has since been repealed, it may be said by acclamation. It is now generally admitted that the popular frenzy on the subject was a delusion, and Lord John's encouragement of it a grave error. But at the time the few who ventured to refuse to echo the popular cry became the objects of general obloquy and suspicion, and it required no small degree of courage openly to oppose a measure called for by the yells of frantic meetings from one end of Great Britain to the other. Lord Aberdeen, at all events, showed the sincerity and depth of his convictions. They were known to members of his family, and to his most intimate friends, but he had not publicly declared them, nor were they generally suspected, when, early in 1851, Lord John Russell sought his assistance, and that of Sir James Graham, in the construction of a new Government, in which Lord Palmerston was not to be included. The temptation was great, and the termination of the isolation of the Peel party would have been a great public gain; but both Lord Aberdeen and Sir James Graham at once declared negotiation impossible,

unless Lord John would withdraw the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. To this Lord John would not, and indeed, after the pledges he had given, could not, consent, though he agreed to withdraw and abandon all its clauses but the first, and for a moment this appeared to afford room for agreement. But Lord Aberdeen, though willing to assent to a declaration repudiating the arrogance and offensiveness of the Pope's mode of action, was resolute in his refusal to agree to any penal enactment, and concert being impossible, the negotiation fell to the ground. The Queen then wished Lord Aberdeen himself to undertake the formation of a Cabinet, but, fully recognising the determination of the people to pass the measure of which he conscientiously disapproved, he declined to attempt a task which must necessarily prove futile. Lord Russell afterwards acknowledged that Lord Aberdeen was right, and has expressed regret that he did not adopt his suggestion to proceed by resolution ;[1] but at the time he thought otherwise, and resumed office with the same Cabinet as before his defeat. Lord Aberdeen gave to Madame de Lieven the following account of the transaction :

After the resignation of Lord John and his whole Cabinet on Saturday morning, the Queen sent for Stanley, who told her that he was not prepared at that moment to undertake the formation of a Government ; but that if other combinations were attempted and should fail, he would then endeavour to perform the task rather than leave the Queen without a Government.

The Queen sent for Lord John again, and also for me, and Graham. We met at the Palace, and after a long interview it was decided that Lord John should try to form a Government by a junction with Peel's friends and the best of his own. The next day, however, convinced Graham and me that we could not conscientiously agree to the 'No Popery' measure which Lord John proposed, and which Parliament appeared to

[1] 'The course suggested by Lord Aberdeen would have been as effectual, and less offensive, than that which I adopted.'—Lord Russell's *Recollections and Suggestions*, p. 257.

sanction. The negotiation was in consequence brought at once to an end, and Lord John resigned his commission.

The Queen then sent for me, and wished me to undertake the formation of the Government. You will readily believe that I was not sorry to have such a reason for declining to do so as was afforded me by the relation in which I stood to the Popery question, and the certainty of defeat in the House of Commons upon it. The next morning the Queen sent for Stanley again, and he is now engaged to form a Government. His prospect of success is gloomy enough. Canning has refused the Foreign Office, and Gladstone has declined to enter his Cabinet. Whether he will persevere, and endeavour to produce something like an Administration, or give up the attempt altogether, I really cannot say. Ridicule will attend him in either case.

And to his youngest son he wrote :

I might have been Prime Minister at this moment had it not been for my resistance to the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. Without doubt this is a most unpopular ground ; but I feel quite satisfied that I am right. Stanley came to me direct from the Queen, and endeavoured to persuade me to be her Foreign Secretary. He went from me to Canning, with the same proposal. Having failed with him and Gladstone, he never had a chance of forming a Government.

Lord Aberdeen said that, when he explained in the House of Lords the reasons which had led him to decline to effect a junction with Lord John, or to form an administration himself, he saw surprise depicted upon the countenances of his hearers. His was the first public protest against the folly and injustice of the contemplated legislation, and he became the leader of resistance to it. On him, consequently, fell the chief burden of opposing it in the House of Lords.

The minority which had resisted the passage of the Bill in the House of Commons had been small, but it will now readily be admitted that the victory in argument rested with it. Few speeches of Mr. Gladstone have been finer than that which he made on this occasion, and that of Sir James Graham is a masterpiece of powerful reasoning.

Lord Aberdeen headed a yet smaller minority in the House of Lords. In the speech in which he opposed the second reading he showed how little the act complained of had in it of an objectionable nature, and that, though done in a foolish and offensive manner, against which protest might well be made, it afforded no ground for penal legislation. The Pope had converted vicars apostolic in England into diocesan bishops, such as already existed in Ireland—a change which had been long contemplated, which had been thought desirable, and which in 1794 it had been sought to effect at the desire of the British Government, and as a concession to its wishes. The prohibition contained in the Roman Catholic Relief Bill to take the title of any existing bishopric in England or Ireland (broken with impunity in the latter country from the time of the passing of the Act) had in this case been scrupulously respected; and the designations of the new bishops were such as, under the provisions of that Act, they might fairly consider themselves entitled to assume. He pointed out the close parallel between the position of the bishops of the Episcopal Church of Scotland and that of the Roman Catholic bishops in England, and showed the folly of supposing that any object was gained by prohibiting the use of names which had no legal significance. He dwelt on the futility of meeting the Pope's insolence by punishing, not the offender, but the innocent English Roman Catholics; and he was able to taunt Lord John with inconsistency, and to expose the persecuting spirit which lurked under the clauses of the Bill. The protest which he recorded against the passage of the Bill obtained but twelve signatures, but there is hardly an article in it which would not now command universal assent. It objected to the measure as inconsistent with either justice or expediency; as mainly

dictated by prevalent excitement, which it was the duty of the Government and the Legislature rather to allay than to encourage; and as inconsistent with full toleration to the Roman Catholic religion, in prohibiting that species of communication with the See of Rome which was indispensable for its perfect discipline and government. It urged further, that the restraints imposed involved the principle, and might involve the practice, of religious persecution; and it asserted that the ancient statutes against the exercise of a foreign jurisdiction, which it was sought to revive, being equally directed against all exercise of jurisdiction, whether by diocesan bishops or by vicars apostolic, were incompatible with our recognised principles of toleration and religious freedom.

At the end of the session Lord Aberdeen left London one of the most unpopular men in Great Britain. That he would in little more than twelve months be summoned, with general assent, to assume the post of Prime Minister would at that time have seemed a wildly improbable prediction. He himself was under the full belief that, by the attitude he had assumed, he had excluded himself from office for the remainder of his life. This was, however, to him no great sacrifice, nor did he feel very uneasy at the invectives heaped on him for his defence of what he felt to be a just cause.

I see (he wrote to his youngest son) that I have been unmercifully abused at a Free Church meeting at Edinburgh, especially by Dr. Candlish. This was to be expected, and cannot be helped; but the exhibition of rancour, bigotry, and intolerance was deplorable.

He was more concerned by what seemed to him the misrepresentation of his arguments by other speakers in the House of Lords. The Duke of Argyll having heard that Lord Aberdeen considered him to have stated them

unfairly, wrote to him to invite a discussion of the unfairness alleged. Lord Aberdeen declined the controversy. He was, he said, an old man retiring from the field of public life; the Duke a young one, to whom its contests were opening, and who would probably obtain in them great distinction. He had no wish to diminish the satisfaction he should feel in those successes by entering upon a personal conflict with him, nor did he consider the defence of his own position of sufficient consequence to lead him to abandon his fixed resolution to avoid any polemical correspondence with a friend. This letter made a great impression on the Duke, who thenceforth did to Lord Aberdeen's character a justice which it had not before received from him.

To this year 1851 belongs the somewhat curious episode of the publication of Mr. Gladstone's letters respecting the condition of political prisoners at Naples. When Mr. Gladstone returned to England after his visit to Naples, he went to Lord Aberdeen, full of the impressions which he had received, and declared his intention to bring the subject before Parliament and the public. Lord Aberdeen dissuaded him from so doing until he had himself used his influence to put an end to the cruelties of which the Neapolitan Government was accused. This Lord Aberdeen promised to do, provided Mr. Gladstone remained silent; for, as he pointed out, silence was essential to allow any chance of success to his intervention, or any mitigation of the prisoners' treatment. He accordingly requested Mr. Gladstone to write a full statement of the case, in which he should be careful to say nothing which did not admit of positive proof, and which might be used by Lord Aberdeen as he might find expedient. Mr. Gladstone's first letter was written in compliance with this request.

Lord Aberdeen then wrote to Prince Schwarzenberg, and enclosed Mr. Gladstone's letter :

I told him (he wrote afterwards to Princess Lieven) that, without myself being able to answer for its truth, my knowledge of Gladstone's character made me certain that it was written by him under full conviction of its accuracy. I drew the Prince's attention to the evil consequences which must follow from such accusations made by a person like Gladstone ; and I entreated him to look at the case in the interest of order and monarchical government of which he had himself been so zealous and so successful a supporter. As an old friend of the Austrian Government, I ventured to request him, if he should find Gladstone's accusation well founded, to employ his influence at Naples with the view of effecting some improvement. Such a proceeding could only be creditable to Austria, and advantageous to the cause which he had at heart. . . .

In the meantime, however, Gladstone began to grow impatient. I did not hear from Prince Schwarzenberg, and he concluded that no attention would be paid to my letter. I had written in May, and we were in the month of July ; he proposed, therefore, to publish without further delay. I remonstrated against this, and told him it would place me in a very false position with respect to Prince Schwarzenberg. I thought he was bound to wait for the Prince's answer, and if that was unfavourable, he might then do as he pleased. I got him to delay another fortnight ; but at last, in spite of my remonstrances, he sent his letter to the press. *Two days* after the publication, Count Buol arrived, bringing me a long letter from Prince Schwarzenberg, in which, after discussing at length the condition and claims of political offenders, he says that, had any official application been made to him, he should have felt it his duty to decline all interference ; but that he would confidentially and privately take measures to comply with my wishes ; and this he was the better able to do, as I had been the means of suspending Gladstone's appeal to the public.

Lord Aberdeen wrote again to Prince Schwarzenberg, and begged him to recollect that the facts of the case and the dictates of sound policy and humanity remained the same. But the mischief was done. Prince Schwarzenberg had been deprived of his most efficient means of acting, and it had been made infinitely more difficult for the King of Naples to alleviate the condition of the political prisoners, even if inclined to do so.

Lord Aberdeen undoubtedly felt that in first resorting to his intervention, and then acting without waiting till he was satisfied that such intervention had failed, Mr. Gladstone had treated him inconsiderately; but with his usual magnanimity he refrained from the expression of displeasure. 'I have certainly,' he wrote, 'much reason to complain of Gladstone; but he is so honest and so perfectly sincere, and we are both personally and politically connected so closely, that although I have not concealed my feelings from him, it is impossible for me to entertain any resentment.' Meanwhile, he wrote a letter to the Neapolitan minister, which he requested might be laid before the King himself, pointing out that Mr. Gladstone's publication, though it might make clemency more difficult, by giving to it an aspect of submission to external force, did not in any way alter the alleged horrors of the imprisonment, or make the claims of humanity less imperative. He repeated the same language to the King's brother, the Count of Aquila, the following spring, in a letter also written for submission to the King. But he wrote in vain. The concession which had been made by the Neapolitan Government to Prince Schwarzenberg was not repeated, now that the matter had become public. The publication of Mr. Gladstone's letters, in the long run, assisted the cause of revolution in Italy, by rendering English opinion hostile to the King. Its immediate effect was to prolong the sufferings of Poerio and his companions.

The dismissal of Lord Palmerston from the Foreign Office, in December 1851, removed almost all practical difference between Lord Aberdeen and Lord John Russell, and it was not without some regret that Lord Aberdeen saw his friends refuse office, when it was offered to them at the beginning of 1852,—a regret tempered by the reflection

that the Russell Cabinet, however it might be patched up, had become too weak to stand, and that an interval of Conservative administration was probably necessary to secure the abandonment by that party of the doctrines of Protection, as well as to bring about a general reorganisation of political forces. In February, on the reassembling of Parliament, Lord Palmerston had his revenge, and carried a motion with respect to the Militia which compelled Lord John Russell to resign. Lord Derby succeeded him as Prime Minister, and the alliance of Lord Aberdeen and his friends now became an object of desire both to the new Government and to the leaders of the Opposition. Lord Derby's Cabinet was almost avowedly provisional. It contained an unusual proportion of mediocrities and untried men, and it was known that its head was ready to purchase Peelite support by a large modification of its composition. Lord Aberdeen's position was a peculiar one. In opinion he far more nearly agreed with Lord John Russell and his friends than with the supporters of Lord Derby; but he had for his whole political lifetime been opposed to the Whig party, and whatever cordiality might exist between its leaders and himself, it was impossible that the mass of that party could view an old opponent with confidence, or that he should not himself regard them with some suspicion. On the other hand, he had been accustomed for many years to act in concert with Lord Derby, and his relations of private friendship with most of the leading members of the Conservative party were such as it was not easy for him to break. Provided, therefore, that Lord Derby frankly renounced Protection, abstained from coquetting with the 'No Popery' cry, and pursued a conciliatory and rational foreign policy, Lord Aberdeen would probably have preferred to see him main-

tained in office, and at a proper time would have come to his help. This was certainly the decided wish of Mr. Gladstone and of Sidney Herbert. Sir James Graham's inclinations were in an opposite direction. The Duke of Newcastle distrusted and disliked Lord Derby and Lord John in nearly equal measure. As, however, the period for the dissolution of Parliament approached, it became more and more evident that the conditions on which alone Lord Aberdeen could give decided support to the Derby Government would not be fulfilled. Lord Derby was going to the country on a mingled cry of Protection and Protestant ascendency, while the extravagant friendship shown by his Foreign Secretary for the author of the *coup d'état* was not at all to Lord Aberdeen's taste. At the same time, Lord Aberdeen cherished a hope that the results of the election might be such as would induce Lord Derby to adopt sounder views, and he was therefore still reluctant to commit himself to any step of decided hostility to the Government.

The dissolution came. Lord Derby made no overture to the Peelites. Lord John Russell, more restless, on July 2nd, wrote to Lord Aberdeen for the purpose of repudiating any association with the sentiments which Lord Palmerston had expressed in the House of Commons as to the future of Italy. In so doing, he was well aware that he removed one of the chief obstacles to intimate co-operation. A month later, he again wrote to suggest concert with a view to the adoption of combined action at the commencement of the ensuing session, to secure the supremacy of Free Trade principles, which might or might not afterwards be followed by closer union. This letter, and the answer to it, have been printed by Mr. Walpole in his Life of Lord John Russell. But in order justly to appreciate the patience

and moderation of Lord Aberdeen, or the weight of his personal influence, it is necessary to read, not only these two letters, or such selected extracts from others as are contained in Mr. Walpole's book, but the whole correspondence carried on during the summer of 1852 by Lord Aberdeen with Lord John himself, and with Sir James Graham, Mr. Gladstone, the Duke of Newcastle, and Sidney Herbert. It is impossible, within the limits of such a volume as this, to quote these letters fully, or even to make a large use of extracts from them. Yet without doing so it is equally impossible really to understand the difficulties with which Lord Aberdeen had to contend in promoting the work of reconciliation, or the patient dignity with which those difficulties were overcome by him. Mr. Gladstone was most reluctant to take any step which might lead towards the absorption of the Peelites into the Liberal party. He considered that Lord Aberdeen and his friends would do that party but little good by such a measure; much less than they might hope to do to the Conservative party by—'not taking, but keeping'—the place they already occupied on the Liberal wing of it; and that they ought not to leave men from whom they differed, only to join other men from whom also they differed. While not indisposed to censure the Government, he was most anxious not to break with those by whom that Government was supported, regarding, as he did, the intelligent and sober-minded among them as the best and most valuable raw material of political party in the country. Partly for the very reason that he did not think over well of the Government, he was unwilling that it should leave office with three hundred men behind it, including almost every person with whom he had been accustomed to vote, to be contemplated by him on the Opposition benches from the other side of the House.

And, on the whole, he considered that the country had benefited by the change of Government. The Colonies were better governed; Lord Derby had no schemes for moulding the Church to his own views in religion, and he would not alter the Constitution. Mr. Gladstone's objections to any further reform of Parliament were in themselves enough to forbid union with Lord John and those who were in a manner pledged to it.

The Duke of Newcastle, on the contrary, was prepared for union with the Liberal party, but not to accept Lord John Russell as its chief. Sir James Graham, again, though preferring Lord Aberdeen as the head of a new Cabinet, was not personally unwilling to see Lord John again Prime Minister; but he was aware that Lord Palmerston, the Peelites generally, the Irish members, and a large section of the Whigs themselves, would not consent to it, and therefore considered his accession to office at that time impossible. On the other hand, there was a section of Lord John's friends who dreamed of the restoration of an exclusive Government of pure Whigs, of which the Peelites were to be the humble followers. That was a dream of the past. Such exclusive combinations had now become impossible. It was even then the dream of but few, but the influence of those few with Lord John was altogether disproportionate to their numbers.

In the midst of these conflicting views, passions, prejudices, and jealousies, Lord Aberdeen sate calm and unruffled, combining, as no other man could have done, what there was of agreement between the different shades of opinion, and minimising the occasions of difference. To Lord John he could say:

I am sorry you should have felt some displeasure at Gladstone's remarks, although I cannot say it is surprising that you should have done so; but you must forgive him for repeating

sentiments which we have, all of us, been in the habit of constantly expressing for years. I have never known much party bitterness myself, and, so far as I am concerned, these feelings have long ceased to exist.

Lenit albescens animos capillus.

I doubt not that you have yourself sometimes attributed motives to Tory opponents which further experience has taught you to abandon. Gladstone possesses so much that is excellent and amiable in character, that you may be fully persuaded, if it should ever be your fate to act together, you will find in him nothing but frankness and cordiality.

With the Duke of Newcastle he thus expostulated :

You must allow me, my dear Duke, very strongly to recommend to you a disposition to put the most charitable construction upon all things. If we are to act at all with Lord John, it is clear that, to do so to any good purpose, it must be upon a footing of mutual confidence and respect. He may have many failings, as we all have ; but if I did not think him essentially honourable and true, there could be no cordiality between us, and therefore no common action.

To Mr. Gladstone he wrote from Buchan Ness :

I will not delay to write to you, although I must say that when I see and admire the various forms and colours of my granite cliffs, and when I recollect, and feel, the motto which I have inscribed over the door of my house,[1] I almost wonder that I should encounter subjects so little calculated to give pleasure. Long habit, the desire of association with friends, and perhaps in some small degree a sense of duty, must account for it. I confess that after the events of the last six years I should look with no common satisfaction on the formation of a Government mainly under the auspices of Peel's friends. I still think that Lord John, from his station and past life, is the fittest person to be at the head of any Liberal Government ; but he appears by common consent to be out of the question at this time. Can Peel's friends supply his place? If high character and ability only were required, *you* would be the person ; but I am aware that, at present at least, this would not be practicable. Whether it would be possible for Newcastle or me to undertake the concern I cannot say ; but I am sure that it must be essentially with Liberal support, and with little chance of accessions from the Protectionist camp. . . . I am not afraid of the effects of reform, and I have no doubt the abuses are sufficiently great to justify those who seek for change. But I much doubt the

[1] *Procul negotiis beatus.*

probability of any great improvement. Influence, intimidation, and corruption are inseparable from any representative system, and, with all our professions, the English are as venal as any people in Europe.

On the other hand, he told Sir James Graham that he had, in his opinion, gone too far in unreserved adhesion to Lord John :

I have a great respect for Lord John, and should very much desire to see him at the head of a Government surrounded by a portion of Peel's friends. Both he and they are already informed of this desire on my part ; but if insuperable obstacles arise in the way of its completion, I am not desirous, as an alternative, of seeing him at the head of a Whig Radical Government. I am not deficient in Liberal views either at home or abroad, but I cannot altogether renounce my Conservative character.

Sir James Graham, in reply, assured Lord Aberdeen that the only person to whom he fixedly adhered was himself ; and at a later date, when returning the correspondence after having perused it in a collected form, said :

I cannot say that I have read it with pleasure, except the part which is your own. You have exhausted every endeavour to soothe irritation and to accommodate differences, but I fear that your success falls short of the scope and merit of your exertions. In truth, if there be a disposition to find fault, and not to forget injuries, the transactions of the last twenty years afford ample ground for accusation and resentment on both sides ; and nothing but a strong sense of public duty, combined with a forgiving temper and hearty goodwill, can extinguish jealousies and enmities such as the strife of party is apt to engender.

When Parliament met, a practical accord had been established between the Peelites and Whigs for Opposition purposes, though it was still doubtful whether it was of such a nature as would suffice to justify official co-operation. While Mr. Gladstone was bent on the accomplishment of the impossible task of separating the Conservative party from the Conservative Government, Lord John and his friends naturally regarded any such aspirations with jealousy ; as their success would have entirely altered the balance of strength

in the probably impending coalition, and would have rendered it one in which the Conservative element would be dominant, instead of one which would practically consist of the old Liberal party with the addition of a few Conservative elements.

The Government escaped defeat at the opening of the session by accepting the Free Trade legislation which it had hitherto been the avowed aim of the Protectionist party to reverse ; but it was clear that their escape was but for the moment, and that defeat on the Budget proposed by Mr. Disraeli was not improbable. In these circumstances, Lord Aberdeen, Lord Lansdowne, and Lord John Russell met at Woburn Abbey, and discussed the situation. The result of these discussions was to convince, at all events, their host that, in the event of the overthrow of the existing Government, the only arrangement which could be made with any chance of permanent stability would be that Lord Aberdeen should head the new Cabinet, and that Lord John should act as leader of the House of Commons.

On the morning of Friday, December 17th, the Government was defeated by a majority of nineteen. Lord Derby resigned that afternoon, and the same night the Queen sent for Lord Aberdeen and Lord Lansdowne to attend her on the following morning. Lord Lansdowne was too unwell to undertake a journey, and the summons being addressed to them jointly, Lord Aberdeen declined to go to Osborne alone, unless specially commanded to do so. Meanwhile he had a full discussion with Lord Lansdowne on the situation of affairs, and on leaving him went to Sir James Graham, who strongly urged the impolicy of his accepting any joint commission. Any offer made by him to Lord John, if spontaneous, would be a pledge both of Lord Aberdeen's personal regard and of his Liberal policy.

Mere submission to the will of the Queen on his part would be regarded by Lord John as a proof of royal favour rather than of his personal regard, and they would start as co-equals if not as rivals. Lord Aberdeen assented to Sir James Graham's reasoning, and assured him that he could only accept undivided authority.

While returning home on foot, across Hyde Park, from Sir James Graham's house in Grosvenor Place, Lord Aberdeen met Lord John Russell, and they took a walk together in the park. Lord Aberdeen told Lord John of his visit to Lord Lansdowne, and of his intention to proceed to Osborne alone the next day, if summoned. Lord John had that morning received a letter from his brother the Duke of Bedford, by whose advice he was often guided, to the effect that political and party differences could be best solved by Lord Aberdeen consenting to be placed at the head of the new Government, and Lord John leading the House of Commons. The Duke wrote in similar terms to Lord Aberdeen himself, adding :

> I need not trouble you with the reasons that have forced this conclusion upon me, but I am quite satisfied that no other arrangement would give us any chance of a strong and lasting Government. I trust, therefore, your sense of public duty will induce you to accept the task.

Influenced probably by his brother's letter, Lord John authorised Lord Aberdeen to inform the Queen that he was willing, should it be Her Majesty's pleasure, to accept the seals of the Foreign Office, and conduct the Government business in the House of Commons. Lord Aberdeen praised the generosity of the offer, and closed with it on the spot. Strengthened by it, he proceeded the next morning to Osborne. He told the Queen fairly that Lord Lansdowne, had he been able to attend the Queen's summons would have advised her to associate Lord John with Lord

Aberdeen in the commission to form a Government, but he added, that he must also inform Her Majesty that he must have declined any such divided authority, for the emergency required her concentrated confidence and entire sanction. The Queen and Prince at once adopted the view taken by Lord Aberdeen, and before he left the closet he kissed the Queen's hand as her First Minister. On returning to town in the evening he went at once to Lord John Russell, and proceeded to discuss with him the formation of the new Cabinet. The following morning, however, Lord Aberdeen received a note from Lord John, stating that a night's reflection had convinced him that he was 'not equal to the work of the Foreign Office, with the lead of the House of Commons,' and intimating an inclination to take the Home Office. This letter was speedily followed by the appearance at Argyll House of Lord John himself; and it then became apparent that, although apprehension of the fatigue of the Foreign Office was really felt by him, he was more largely influenced by apprehension of the effect likely to be produced on his political friends by his acceptance of any office whatsoever: an apprehension which led him not only to retract his offer to take the Foreign Office, but also to refuse to form any part of the new Administration; to which, however, he offered his support. There is reason to suppose that, down to the time when he saw Lord Aberdeen after his return from Osborne on Sunday night, Lord John had not communicated to any one the offer which he had made, or his intention of complying with the advice of the Duke of Bedford; and that, when those in his most intimate confidence became aware of that intention, any hesitation or reluctance he may have felt to take the step contemplated was so worked on as to induce him to withdraw from joint action with Lord Aber-

deen. Lord Aberdeen's position was, of course, wholly changed by this determination. To head a Government dependent for its existence on the wayward support of Lord John free from all the obligations of office, and necessarily composed to a great extent of men who would look for guidance to their old chief rather than to the actual Prime Minister, as would also the majority of the supporters of the new Government in the House of Commons, was to place himself in a position which he at least never would consent to assume; and he at once determined, if Lord John persevered in the resolution now announced, to resign the commission which he had undertaken during the existence of a different state of things. On the following day (Tuesday, 21st) Lord John offered to lead the House of Commons without office, and on the evening of the 22nd so far reverted to his original proposal as to consent to accept the Foreign Office, provided his tenure of that post were of short duration, and he were then allowed to assume the position of Leader of the House of Commons without office, which he had chosen. An anxious week followed before the Administration was finally formed. It was, of course, impossible that all those who had held office under Lord John Russell two years before should be included in a Government which necessarily comprised members of the Peelite party, who by their talents, and by the share they had taken in the overthrow of Lord Derby, were marked out for Cabinet office. But every disappointed Whig considered himself the victim of injustice, and complained that he was ill-used by Lord Aberdeen and abandoned by Lord John, who was by no means allowed to repose upon a bed of roses. So strong was this feeling that, after the Cabinet had been formed, and all the great offices of State disposed of, with Lord John's full assent, he insisted on the addition of

other Whig members to the Cabinet. Sir James Graham wrote in his diary :

> I discussed these matters at Argyll House with Lord Aberdeen and Lord John : if we three were left alone, we could easily adjust every difficulty ; it is the intervention of interested parties on opposite sides which mars every settlement. . . . I never passed a week so unpleasantly. It was a battle for places from hostile camps, and the Whigs disregarded fitness for the public service altogether. They fought for their men as partisans, and all other considerations as well as consequences were disregarded. Lord Aberdeen's patience and justice are exemplary ; he is firm and yet conciliatory, and has ended by making an arrangement which is on the whole impartial, and quite as satisfactory as circumstances would admit.

The same hand thus described the new Cabinet when formed :

> It is a powerful team, but it will require good driving. There are some odd tempers and queer ways among them ; but on the whole they are gentlemen, and they have a perfect gentleman at their head, who is honest and direct, and who will not brook insincerity in others.

It is impossible to dissociate the Aberdeen Cabinet from the chief event which marked its existence,—the Crimean War ; and the coalition has accordingly been regarded as a failure. With that war and its causes I will hereafter deal. But the year of peace which preceded it is well worthy of attention, and its annals show that the coalition, far from being a failure, was during that period a remarkable success. It would have continued to be so, but for the unfortunate differences which arose with regard to foreign affairs. There has seldom been a more brilliant session than that of 1853, or one which closed more triumphantly for the Government of the day. The first Budget of Mr. Gladstone gave it illustration, and marked him out, more distinctly than had ever been the case before, as the future leader of the House of Commons. That this remarkable Budget was presented in an unmutilated form

was due to Lord Aberdeen, whose steady support never wavered, and who refused to allow a single alteration in it, in spite of the alarms of many of his colleagues and hints of resignation from more than one.

Discouraged by the reception of his scheme, and not then possessing the self-confidence conferred by the long exercise of authority, Mr. Gladstone began to doubt whether he could be right, or at all events whether it would be fair to his colleagues, to drag them reluctantly after him, and whether he ought not therefore to modify or abandon his scheme. He accordingly went to Lord Aberdeen to state this doubt, and leave to him its decision. Without a moment's hesitation Lord Aberdeen at once pronounced that any modification would spoil the plan, and bade Mr. Gladstone proceed, saying that he would make himself responsible for the acceptance of the scheme by the Cabinet. After this interview, Mr. Gladstone says he hesitated no more, and felt no further doubt as to the course he should pursue.

The Government of India Bill, in itself a great measure, was carried virtually as proposed by the Government, which indeed met with no check or rebuff during the whole session. But, above all, the fusion of the Peelites with the general body of the Liberal party was practically complete. On all questions of domestic administration, save Reform, the Cabinet was essentially at one, and where its members differed, whether on home or foreign affairs, the line of cleavage between them was not that of the parties to which they had formerly belonged. The opponents of parliamentary reform counted but one member of the Peelites among their number, who on this point was in agreement with two old Whigs. Nor on the great question of the negotiations with Russia was the division one between those who had

followed Sir Robert Peel and those who had followed Lord John Russell. The decided war party in the Cabinet consisted of Lord Lansdowne, Lord Palmerston, and the Duke of Newcastle. Lord John Russell's uncertain influence was to be found now on the one side and now on the other. But all the other members of the Cabinet, without an exception, not only agreed with Lord Aberdeen in desiring the preservation of peace, but also as to the measures most likely to preserve it. 'Remember that the silent members of the Cabinet are all with you,' wrote Lord Granville, then President of the Council, in the summer of 1853, after a hot discussion had taken place as to the degree of support to be afforded to Turkey. When, shortly after the close of the session, the acceptance by the Emperor of Russia of the Vienna Note appeared to put an end to all danger to the continuance of peace, Lord Aberdeen considered his work as done. He had conducted the Government triumphantly through a session of Parliament; he had, as he fondly thought, preserved peace when endangered; he had established cordial unity of action between his own friends and those of Lord John; Ireland was quiet and prosperous, and the irritation caused by the Ecclesiastical Titles Bills had to a great degree subsided, now that the measure was seen to be totally inoperative. Lord Aberdeen therefore thought the time had come when he might retire in Lord John's favour. He obtained the assent, though the reluctant assent, of most of his friends to this arrangement, and felt no doubt as to his power ultimately to persuade those members of the Cabinet most averse to the step to consent to it. He anticipated escape in a few weeks from the fatigues of office, and the satisfaction of leaving to Lord John the chief place in an united Cabinet, Liberal, but yet Conservative, in its principles. His hopes were destined to disappointment.

CHAPTER IX

THE CRIMEAN WAR

Prince Menschikoff's Mission—Count Nesselrode's Forecast of Events—Alarm felt in England—The Principalities occupied by Russia—The Vienna Note—Subsequent Negotiations—Battle of Sinope—Declaration of War—Policy of Lord Aberdeen during the War.

I NOW enter on the saddest chapter of this story—that which relates how, under the administration of the most devoted lover of peace who has governed the country since the Revolution, England became involved in the only European war in which she has taken part for the last seventy-five years.

It is, I think, impossible for any one who now calmly reviews the question, to deny that Russia had fair cause for complaint against the Porte, and was entitled—perhaps, indeed, required by a due regard to her own honour—to demand some reparation from her. Concessions had been made, at the dictation of France, to the Latin clergy, which were clearly irreconcilable with pledges given to Russia, and the demand made by her that members of the Greek Church should enjoy equal privileges with the members of other Christian communities was not in itself unjust or even unreasonable. Indeed, there is good reason to believe that, but for interference from without, Prince Menschikoff, who had been sent to Constantinople on a special mission for the purpose, would have come to a satisfactory arrangement with the Porte on this subject. The history of the negotiations

published by the Russian Government[1] shows that Menschikoff all but accepted the provision which, as the condition of their signing it, the Turks wished to insert in the convention proposed by him ; and that he would have done so, had he not thought the request to be, as in fact it was, the result of foreign dictation.

The English Government prudently refused to comply with Colonel Rose's request, that the English fleet should be sent to the entrance of the Dardanelles on the arrival of Prince Menschikoff's mission at Constantinople ; but the action of the French Emperor, who, without waiting for English co-operation, at once despatched the Toulon fleet to Smyrna, seriously complicated the situation, and by its implied menace made it more difficult for the Emperor Nicholas to recede from his demands, or even modify them. Into the secret schemes of Louis Napoleon we cannot penetrate ; but it does no injustice to his character to believe that he deliberately desired a breach with Russia, which would enable him not only to win glory for the French arms in the East, but to do so without exciting the ill-will of England ; nay, more, which might enable him to exhibit England to Europe as his ally in a war in which his armies must play a far more considerable part than hers. This was the opinion of Count Nesselrode. In a private letter written immediately after the proclamation of the French Empire in December 1852, not addressed to Lord Aberdeen, but intended for his perusal, he had said :

> Voici, je le crains, quel peut être son plan et la manière dont il raisonne. Louis Napoléon doit s'être dit. . . . 'Ce que l'Occident me refuse, il faut le chercher en Orient. Brouillons la Russie et la Porte, en obligeant celle-ci, par mes exigences, à mécontenter et insulter la première. Ou la Russie, par éloignement pour la guerre, dévorera en silence les affronts

[1] *A Diplomatic Study of the Crimean War*, 1880.

que je forcerai les Turcs à lui faire subir, ou bien elle perdra patience, et voudra en avoir raison, en prenant l'initiative de la guerre. Dans le premier cas, rien de mieux. Je serai parvenu à anéantir le crédit de la Russie en Orient, et à mettre l'influence Française au-dessus de toutes les autres, y compris l'Angleterre. Dans le second cas, si, poussée à bout, la Russie a recours à la guerre, cette guerre-là, soutenue au nom de l'indépendance et de l'intégrité de la Porte, je la ferai dans de toutes autres conditions que je ne pourrais la faire en Occident. Il ne s'agira plus pour moi de combattre seul et sans alliés contre une coalition. C'est la Russie qui, à son tour, se trouvera seule et sans alliés, contre tout le monde. C'est de la gloire, et du bruit, à bon marché comparativement. En attendant, mes forces principales restent sur pied en Occident. Elles continuent par leur attitude à inquiéter l'Autriche et la Prusse, à maintenir dans ma dépendance les petits Etats de l'Allemagne, et de l'Italie, et à m'assurer, sans danger sérieux, la suprématie politique en Europe.

'Il est bien vrai que la Russie, si elle nous est inférieure sur mer, conserverait contre la Turquie la libre disposition de ses forces de terre. Elle peut occuper les Principautés, franchir de nouveau les Balkans, soulever les populations Chrétiennes de son rit, entrer à Constantinople, renverser l'Empire Ottoman ! Eh bien, soit, qu'elle le renverse ! Elle ne saurait tout prendre ; encore moins, tout garder. Et dès lors surgit la question du partage. Maroc, Tunis, l'Egypte, la Palestine, la Syrie, Candie, dans tout cela assurément je puis prétendre à quelque chose. Sinon—obtenir en Europe, à titre d'indemnités pour ce que j'abandonnerai à d'autres en Orient, la Belgique, la Savoie, la frontière Rhénane. Il y a là de quoi négocier, de quoi remanier de mille façons la carte territoriale de l'Europe. L'œuvre de 1815 aura été mise à néant. Le rétablissement de l'Empire n'aura pas été un vain mot. Il aura, comme il me le faut pour ma gloire, et mes intérêts de conservation, agrandi au déhors les limites et la force morale de la France.'

Convenez que si ce plan n'est pas réel il est au moins très plausible. Sa mise à exécution nous placerait dans la plus fâcheuse des positions :—celle de jouer forcément le jeu de Louis-Napoléon ; soit que nous nous résignions à la paix, soit que nous prenions les armes.

Count Nesselrode's forecast of the future was prophetic. The theory put forward by him is, as he himself says, 'at least plausible.' That Louis Napoleon, when he sent the Toulon fleet to Smyrna, shared the apprehensions of an immediate Russian descent on Constantinople, honestly

entertained by Colonel Rose, it is impossible to suppose. That he wished to embroil England and Russia is not improbable. That he had rendered any peaceful accommodation of the question more difficult is unquestionable.

On the withdrawal of Prince Menschikoff from Constantinople renewed apprehension was felt of an immediate descent of Russian forces on Constantinople, and Lord Palmerston, in a letter to Sir James Graham, urged that the English fleet, in conjunction with that of France, should be sent to the nearest safe anchorage to the Dardanelles, ready to proceed at once to the defence of Constantinople should it appear endangered. Lord Aberdeen replied :

My great objection to the course proposed is, that it does nothing effectual. Sending our fleet into Turkish waters appears, in the eyes of the public, to be a vigorous and decisive step ; but in truth it affords no protection whatever to the Turks. Sir Baldwin Walker tells you that, for any practical purpose, there is little difference between Malta and Smyrna. He says that a Russian force could land without difficulty at a point near the entrance of the Bosphorus and advance to Constantinople, even if the English fleet should be at the Dardanelles. I know the spot well, from which the distance to the city is only about fifteen or twenty miles. This makes an end of all the elaborate calculations of the time required by the Russians to march from the Bay of Bourgas, or any distant point on the Black Sea. I have the greatest reliance on the opinion of Sir Baldwin Walker ; I have none whatever on that of Colonel Rose. If, therefore, you expect a *coup de main*, it is not at the Dardanelles that you can prevent it ; for you are aware, too, that the wind in these waters is northerly during the whole of the summer months.

If we have good reason to expect an attack on Constantinople, and are disposed to quarrel with Russia for the protection of the Turks, we ought to approach the capital, or rather to enter the Black Sea, by which means any naval movement on the part of Russia could effectually be stopped.

The only effect of such half-measures as are recommended would be to release the Emperor of Russia from the obligations which he has voluntarily contracted towards us, without accomplishing our own object.

It is impossible to suppose that the removal of our fleet, under the circumstances in which it will take place, can be

regarded as merely a friendly visit in a Turkish port, or that it bears any resemblance to the case mentioned of a French fleet being recently anchored in Torbay. It can only be considered as a menace, and must be so intended.

As we do not know the manner in which the diplomatic rupture has taken place (which, of itself, by no means involves the necessity of war), I think it is unwise to give up the moral guarantee we now possess of the conduct of the Emperor towards us for no definite object. If he should violate his engagements towards us, and give us real ground of offence, if we act at all, we ought to resent it worthily, and not by a poor demonstration which only insults him, and does nothing effectual either for us or for the Power we desire to protect.

Lord Aberdeen's task in the management of his own Cabinet was not easy. Though prepared to support him loyally in case of his deciding that the fleet should remain at Malta, even his own immediate friends were in favour of an advance eastwards; some, because they were really apprehensive as to the safety of Constantinople; some, because they thought the step would be attended with popularity; some, because it was, ostensibly and technically, merely such a change of position as the Mediterranean fleet was accustomed to make on the approach of summer. But, through all these negotiations, Lord Aberdeen had a yet greater difficulty to deal with than the wishes of his own colleagues—the imperative exigencies and the uncertain faith of the ally with whom we were acting. The French Emperor urged the advance of the fleets to the Dardanelles in terms that could not be trifled with, and all the less because the English Government had some reason to believe that, while pressing for such a demonstration, he was at the same time secretly making overtures to the Emperor Nicholas for an alliance on the basis of common hostility to England. Lord Aberdeen felt that he must give way, and be content with depriving the step of any character of marked hostility. He wrote to Lord Clarendon:

I should have wished, before moving our fleet, to know the

circumstances under which Menschikoff left Constantinople, and of which, at present, we are not perfectly informed. If friendly interference be still possible, we may, perhaps, sacrifice our chance of using it with effect, after having adopted a step so hostile to Russia.

The Cabinet, or at least a portion of it, appears to wish that the fleet should sail, without waiting to know on what footing Russia and the Porte had been placed by the rupture of the negotiation. I do not object to this, but I think you should communicate frankly to Russia the motive and spirit of our movement. It is possible that the step we shall have taken may not destroy our salutary influence so much as I fear.

Looking to the means of preserving and restoring peace as the great object we ought always to have in view, I think our best prospect of success is to be found in the union of the four Powers, and in their firm but friendly representations at St. Petersburg.

The authority given to Lord Stratford to call up the fleet to Constantinople is a fearful power to place in the hands of any minister, involving as it does the question of peace or war. The passage of the Dardanelles, being a direct violation of treaty, would make us the aggressors, and give to Russia a just cause of war. It is most important, therefore, that Lord Stratford should not have recourse to such a step, except under the pressure of actual hostilities, or under circumstances fully equivalent to such a state. It is right that we should know on what grounds—short of the occupation of Constantinople by a foreign force—the Parliament and people of this country would be prepared to enter into a war on behalf of such a State as Turkey.

On July 2, 1853, the Russian armies crossed the Pruth and occupied the provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia, which the Emperor Nicholas declared his intention of holding until the Porte had given him the satisfaction he required. The act, which would have been perfectly legitimate as an act of war, was high-handed and unjustifiable on the part of a Power at peace with the sovereign whose territories were thus invaded. It would have warranted an immediate declaration of war on the part of Turkey. Possibly it was intended to provoke one, but more probably the Emperor of Russia regarded it as a proof of moderation on his part. He had causes of grievance against the

Porte which were unremoved. He had exhausted the resources of direct negotiation, and, in his own opinion at least, would have been fully justified in striving to obtain reparation by force. In abstaining from hostilities, and in occupying, as a material guarantee, not an integral part of the Turkish Empire, but two provinces which were already virtually independent of the Sultan's control, he probably considered that he acted with self-restraint and forbearance.

The English Cabinet was unanimously of opinion that the Porte should be advised not to meet the Russian invasion by a declaration of war, and that efforts should be made, in conjunction with France, Austria, and Prussia, to discover terms of accommodation which Turkey might offer and Russia accept. The grave importance which France and England attached to the transactions in progress was already marked by the approach of their fleets to the Dardanelles, a measure at which the Emperor Nicholas was not entitled to take umbrage, for it conveyed no overt threat; but which was quite sufficient to intimate to him that any further forward movement on his part would call forth the active opposition of France and England. In the advice given to the Porte, Lord Palmerston concurred; but a few days later, on the publication of a circular by Count Nesselrode, in which the invasion of the Principalities was treated as a set-off against the attitude assumed by the French and English fleets, he recommended that the fleets should pass the Dardanelles and take post in the Bosphorus, or even enter the Black Sea. Lord Aberdeen made a minute on this proposal as follows:

There is, at last, every probability that our endeavours to preserve peace are now on the point of being attended with success. We have prepared a form of Convention between Russia and the Porte which is cordially supported by the

French Government. It preserves the dignity of the Sultan, and gives to the Emperor everything he can reasonably demand. Indeed, it fulfils all the conditions which Count Nesselrode has himself repeatedly described as being necessary for the restoration of friendly relations with the Porte. The language of Austria has of late become more firm and independent, and there can be no doubt that our plan of Convention will be warmly adopted at Vienna.

Under these circumstances, if other projects of settlement already made the subject of discussion should fail, we have good ground to hope that the plan of Convention proposed by us will be successful, unless we shall create fresh difficulties by our own imprudence.

It may readily be admitted that Count Nesselrode's last circular, although with some pacific expressions, is, in its general character and language, open to very serious objections. The assertion that the entrance of the Russian troops into the Principalities was produced by the appearance of the combined English and French fleets in the Dardanelles is not only not true in point of fact, but, even if such had been the case, would have left the act itself equally unjustifiable. I think, therefore, that this circular should be answered in a tone of grave expostulation and remonstrance, but with calmness and dignity; and while plainly expressing our own sense of the proceeding, taking care, at the same time, not to aggravate the difference by passion or invective.

When the four Powers simultaneously advised the Porte not to regard the entrance of the Russian troops into the Principalities as a *casus belli*, but to meet it only with a solemn protest, it was not that they attached any weight to the declaration of the Emperor that he did not intend to make war upon Turkey, or that they entertained any doubt of an act of real hostility having been committed, but they wished to accept his declaration so far as to preserve in their own hands the means of negotiation with greater hopes of success than if the utmost extremity of war had been proclaimed. We were bound, therefore, to make use of this interval in the interest of peace, and fortunately may now congratulate ourselves on the prospect before us.

But if we answer Count Nesselrode's note by sending our fleet into the Bosphorus or the Black Sea, what shall we gain by this empty bravado? We shall have violated the stipulations of a treaty and have made the chances of peace infinitely less probable. Instead of such logic as this, it would be more reasonable at once to declare war, and no longer to pretend to seek peace while we adopt measures calculated to render it unattainable.

When the Cabinet determined to send the fleet from Malta

to the Dardanelles, it was not to insult Russia, but to be at hand in order to protect Constantinople should it be necessary. Constantinople is not in danger, nor is it threatened ; but if at any time information, really credible, should be obtained of preparations at Sebastopol, or elsewhere, for such an attack, the combined fleets might properly leave their present position and repair at once to the scene of action.

It may be well to observe that the only hostile operation contemplated by the Cabinet has been the defence of Constantinople against a Russian attack. How far we may contract engagements with the Porte, in the event of actual war, and under what circumstances we should find ourselves justified in being finally committed against Russia, ought to be the subject of future deliberation.

We are at present bound by no stipulations of treaty in this respect, and are free to adopt such a course as may appear most consistent with our real interests and honour.

The arguments of Lord Aberdeen convinced even the authors of the proposal. Lord John wrote: 'I agree generally in the views you have expressed in your paper in answer to Palmerston.' And Lord Palmerston himself wrote: 'I acquiesce in your reasoning ; and on consideration I admit that, as we have launched proposals for a peaceful arrangement, it would be better not to endanger the negotiation by throwing into it any fresh element of difficulty.'

Unfortunately the English draft Convention, which would probably have been accepted both by Russia and Turkey, did not in the end find favour at the Tuileries. If a peaceful settlement of the dispute could not be avoided, Louis Napoleon wished to appear as the principal agent in effecting it, and proposed, in lieu of the Convention, that the Porte should address a Note to the Russian Government to the same effect. With this French draft Note as a basis, the diplomatists of Europe set to work to devise terms which might afford to Russia the satisfaction to which she was entitled, and thus remove her from Roumania, and which might at the same time be safely granted by Turkey. The result of these

deliberations was the famous Vienna Note; which, recommended by the Four Powers, and accepted as satisfactory by the Czar, was rejected by the Turks as containing—unless modified as they proposed—admissions incompatible with the safety of the Ottoman Empire.

The negotiations which took place up to this period have been fully and carefully detailed by more than one historian; but, after recounting their failure, and the non-acceptance of the Note by the Turks, a sense of weariness and lassitude appears to have overcome all these writers, who have apparently paid little attention to the discussions which subsequently took place, and at all events have given but a meagre and too often an inaccurate account of them. And yet the negotiations which took place in the six months which intervened between the final abandonment of the Vienna Note on September 19, 1853, and the declaration of war on March 13, 1854, were of the highest importance, and more than once afforded the fairest promise of success. It is my own firm belief that, but for the catastrophe of Sinope, peace between England and Russia would have remained unbroken. Be this as it may, some knowledge of these negotiations is essential to a proper appreciation of the position and conduct of Lord Aberdeen during this period, and though the limited space at my command renders the task one of all but insuperable difficulty, I shall attempt to give a hasty sketch of their course and character.

Mr. Walpole, in his eagerness to defend Lord John Russell, has suggested an entirely novel theory, which did not at the time occur to any one engaged in the discussion. It is that, after proposing to Russia that she should accept the Turkish modifications, it became impossible to urge the Turks to accept the Vienna Note in its unmodified form.

This would, no doubt, have been the case had the acceptance of the modifications been recommended to Russia on the ground that they were essential, or even useful ; but this was not so. The Four Powers, in effect, said to the Porte : 'We consider that you ought to sign the note which we have prepared, and which the Emperor Nicholas has already accepted as a full satisfaction of his complaints ; but, as the alterations you have made appear to us, though unnecessary and without importance, to be in themselves unobjectionable, we are ready to see whether he will accept them, and so terminate the affair to the satisfaction of all parties. Still we cannot press such a demand ; and should he refuse (as he well may) to admit any alteration in a Note prepared by the Powers of Europe in concert, which he has already accepted, we must adhere to our advice, already given, that you should sign it unaltered.' This was the course on which Lord Aberdeen had determined, before the transmission of the Turkish modifications to the Czar, and this course would unquestionably have been adopted, but for one of those singular fatalities which so often occurred in the course of these negotiations.

The Russian refusal had been anticipated, and in no way altered the policy of the English Cabinet. It was couched in moderate language and courteous terms, and gave as the reason for refusal the repugnance of the Emperor to permit the Turks to alter the terms of a document which had been prepared by the Four Powers in the interests of the Porte, and already accepted by the Emperor. The validity of this reason not even Lord Palmerston was inclined to deny. In conjunction with Lord Aberdeen and Lord Clarendon, he considered that the modifications must be abandoned ; and he concurred, almost as a matter of course, in the recommendation to the Sultan

to accept the unmodified Note, which gave so much offence to Lord John Russell. Had this advice reached Constantinople, either the Porte would have complied with it, in which case the incident would have terminated; or by its refusal would have absolved the English Government from all further interference in its behalf. Unfortunately, the indiscreet or culpable action of a subordinate member of the Russian Mission at Berlin led to the appearance in a German newspaper of a memorandum which had been forwarded to Baron Budberg, the Russian Minister there, for his confidential information. In this document the modifications were compared with the original draft, and their effect pointed out. From this comparison it plainly appeared that the Russian Government interpreted the Note in a different sense from that given to it by the Four Powers, and had rejected the modifications because they in distinct terms excluded that right of interference which the Russians considered the original Note to confirm, and the Turkish Government held it to confer, but which it had not been the intention of the Powers to recognise. Neither this paper, nor the fact which it revealed, was ever officially communicated to the English Government; but the knowledge was, of course, sufficient to make it impossible honestly to press for the adoption of the unmodified Note by the Porte.

But vexatious as was the failure of an arrangement which had been so nearly effected, and which would have secured the maintenance of peace, it was not at first supposed by the ministers of any of the Four Courts, or at St. Petersburg itself, that the mischief done was irremediable. One mode of settlement had failed; another had to be devised. Nor, in truth, was there any essential difficulty in framing such a document. It was the will to do so

which was wanting. The Sultan and his advisers (and it was not by Turkish counsellors alone that he was guided) were determined that the contest should not have a peaceful issue. The opportunity for a contest with Russia, in which Turkey might be aided by the armies of France and England, was not one to be lost. The Porte determined to follow up the rejection of the Vienna Note by a declaration of war, should a pacific settlement not be obtained within a certain limited time. This at once rendered a settlement far more difficult, though even yet not hopeless. Seized in a right spirit, the propositions made by the Emperor Nicholas, at his meeting with the Emperor of Austria at Olmütz, might have easily been made the foundation of a peaceful solution of the question at issue. The preference was, however, given to a plan proposed by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, that a fresh Note, which he had himself prepared, free from the objections to which the original Note was liable, and yet containing all that the Emperor of Russia had declared at Olmütz to be needed to give him satisfaction, should be substituted for that originally put forward. Whether Lord Stratford really felt the responsibility of his position, and gave this counsel with an honest view to its acceptance, or only as a means of rendering abortive any other scheme founded on the conferences at Olmütz, and with the knowledge that what he proposed would be refused by the Porte, can never be known. It was felt to be an advantage that the proposal should have emanated from him. It would, it was thought, be difficult for him even indirectly to suggest the rejection of a Note known to be his own work ; it might be hoped that, as his own, he might feel some anxiety in assuring its success, and that his self-esteem might be gratified by effecting what the most eminent diplomatists of Europe had vainly

attempted to accomplish. The wording of the Note appeared to Lord Aberdeen to be such as ought perfectly to satisfy both Russia and Turkey; but he equally distrusted Lord Stratford and the Turkish ministers; and to ensure the acceptance by the Porte of the new Note *as presented*, he considered it essential that it should be accompanied by a declaration that, if it were not adopted, the Four Powers would not 'permit themselves, in consequence of unfounded objections, or by the declaration of war, which they have already condemned, to be drawn into a policy inconsistent with the peace of Europe, as well as with the true interests of Turkey itself.'

To Mr. Gladstone, who was absent from London, Lord Aberdeen, on October 17th, wrote thus:

I believe we are now arrived at the last step it may be possible for us to take. Lord Stratford has informed us that the only chance left for arresting the progress of war is by a fresh Note to be presented to the Turks with a perfect union of the Four Powers, and a determined interference on their part. A Note has consequently been prepared, in which all the Turkish objections to the Vienna Note have been obviated, and drawn up in such terms as may reasonably be accepted by both parties. It is proposed to accompany this Note with a declaration by each of the Four Powers, stating their desire to recognise and give effect to the principle which dictated the Treaty of 1841 by the preservation of the Turkish Empire. The declaration then proceeds to describe more particularly the objects of the Powers, and how they are provided for by the Note, which is recommended to the consideration of the Porte.

This is how the matter stands; but, reasonable as it is, I fear the proposition will not have the least chance of success. The Turks, with all their barbarism, are cunning enough, and see clearly the advantages of their situation. Step by step they have drawn us into a position in which we are more or less committed to their support. It would be absurd to suppose that, with the hope of active assistance from England and France, they should not be desirous of engaging in a contest with their formidable neighbour. They never had such a favourable opportunity before, and may never have again. They will therefore contrive to elude our proposals and

keep us in our present state, from which it will be difficult to escape.

I have thought it necessary to propose such an addition to the declaration of the Four Powers as is contained in the enclosed paper. It seems to me perfectly reasonable and just, considering our relation to the State on whose behalf we are attempting to mediate, and as affording the only chance of inducing the Turks to listen to pacific advice. Should the Turks yield and approve of our Note, we must be prepared for the possible refusal of the Emperor. In this case, I fear it would only be just to give the Turks a greater degree of support than we should otherwise have been disposed to do.

Prior to the Turkish declaration of war, I should have had no fear of the Emperor's acceptance ; but I cannot say what effect this, and the indignity inflicted by the summons of Omer Pasha, may have produced.

There may be some difference of opinion with respect to my proposal. Clarendon at first entirely agreed with me, but at present seems rather doubtful. Palmerston certainly, and Lord John probably, will be against it. Newcastle approves of it, and Graham thinks it indispensable. My own opinion is, that it can only be objected to by those who really wish to make peace impossible.

It soon became evident, however, that persistence in requiring such an addition would break up the Cabinet.

Reasonable as it was (wrote Lord Aberdeen to Mr. Gladstone), I have not thought it prudent to adhere to it. I found that both Palmerston and Lord John were determined to resist it to the utmost extremity, and I had to consider how far I should be justified in creating a breach on such grounds ; for the practical question at issue would have been whether we should impose on the Turks the necessity of making no alteration whatever in a Note which was to be signed by them and delivered in their name. To those who did not know all that had passed such a condition would have appeared harsh and unjust, and I felt that it could not properly be made the ground of an irreconcilable difference in the Cabinet.

Viewed in the light of subsequent events, I cannot but regret that Lord Aberdeen did not, nevertheless, continue to press the adoption of this paragraph, the terms of which are given on the preceding page. It afforded almost the last chance of recovering for England her freedom of action. Lord Aberdeen might have failed (for though the great majority of the Cabinet shared Lord Aberdeen's views,

Lord John's withdrawal would have broken up the Government), but his action would have relieved him from all responsibility for subsequent events. His retirement would, indeed, have hastened the commencement of the war, but he would have retired in circumstances, and with a following, which might soon have brought him back to power as the Minister of peace. But at the moment he thought that he might attain the end he had at heart by another method.

> I propose (he wrote) that we should exact from the Turks a suspension of active hostilities during the progress of the negotiation in which we are engaged on their account. . . . In case of the refusal of the Turks, it . . . will give us the liberty of action we desire. Clarendon does not object to this proposal, and is to send it to-night to Palmerston and Lord John, by whom I fear it will not be favourably received. Nevertheless, even should this be the case, I am disposed to insist on its adoption.

No objection was, however, made by them, and the instruction, with one slight (but, as it turned out, fatal) addition made by Lord John Russell, was at once despatched to Lord Stratford. Everything now depended upon time. If the Turks at once, and before any active hostilities took place, signed the newly proposed Note, there was every reason to suppose that it would be accepted by the Emperor of Russia. It became, therefore, the business of those who desired war, and desired also to retain for the Porte the support of France and England, so to manage, that the consideration of the new Note by the Porte should be prolonged until after war had actually commenced.

The paragraph drafted by Lord Aberdeen, and accepted by the Cabinet, had required the Porte to abstain from hostilities during the progress of the negotiations undertaken on its behalf. In the despatch actually sent, the words 'for a reasonable time' were inserted by Lord

John Russell, and of this full advantage was taken. This 'reasonable time' was by the Porte, with Lord Stratford's full approval, if not at his suggestion, limited to one fortnight,—a period wholly insufficient for negotiation with Russia, and ensuring the commencement of hostilities before any fresh despatches could be received from England. Meanwhile, though acceptance of the English proposal might lead to peace, rejection of it was unsafe, as it might involve withdrawal of English support. Lord Stratford, in this dilemma, assured Lord Clarendon that Reshid Pasha was *personally* inclined to agree to the adoption of the new Note, but that there would be great difficulty in inducing *the Council* to do so. After hostilities, however, commenced, there was no longer danger that what might still seem an act of deference to England could lead to any practical result. But when Lord Stratford at length reported the tardy acquiescence of the Turks, and their acceptance of the desired form of Note, he must have well known that it was too late, and that the only answer he could receive would be that which was in fact returned, that it was useless now to ask Russia to accept a Note which a few weeks previously she would have gladly received. Shots had been fired in anger; blood had been shed; the war no longer existed on paper only, but had become a stern reality, and only a treaty of peace could now put an end to the differences between the two Powers. Lord Palmerston had speedily repented of his acquiescence in the instructions despatched to Lord Stratford, and sent a message to Lord Aberdeen to that effect. Lord Aberdeen replied on November 6th:

> I understood that you had not only seen and approved of the instructions in question, but that some alterations had been adopted at your suggestion. From the very commencement of this unfortunate contest it has always been my desire to

preserve for ourselves an entire liberty of action and an unfettered judgment under all circumstances that might arise. The demands of Prince Menschikoff were certainly unreasonable, and the invasion of the Principalities was most unjustifiable; but as we had no treaty obligations with the Porte, we were perfectly free to take any such course as our own interests and the justice of the case should seem to require. It is clearly ascertained that the Treaty of 1841 imposed no other stipulation on the contracting parties than an obligation to observe the ancient regulations of the Turkish Empire, by which the Straits of the Dardanelles and of the Bosphorus were closed against foreign ships of war when the Porte was at peace.

When the rupture of diplomatic relations took place on the departure of Prince Menschikoff, the great object we proposed to ourselves was to preserve peace, by advising such reasonable and timely concessions on the part of Turkey as might be made without any real sacrifice of the dignity or independence of the Sultan. This has been our policy throughout the whole of the transactions connected with this dispute; and it is the policy which, as it seems to me, we ought still to keep steadily in view.

It is true that, during these negotiations, we have found it necessary to assume a more hostile attitude towards Russia, by advancing our fleet to Constantinople, and by giving assurance to the Porte that we were prepared to defend the capital, or even any part of the Turkish territory, from an attack by sea; thereby greatly extending the scope of the proposition made to us by the French Government. But this decision did not preclude the continuance of negotiation; on the contrary, it was expressly assented to by me on the clear understanding that such was to be the case.

Peace is still our object; and we have surely a right to expect that the Turks should do nothing to counteract the endeavours we are making on their behalf. Recent intelligence from Constantinople appeared to indicate some disposition to listen to the pacific recommendations of Lord Stratford; but the sincerity of this disposition is doubtful, for Omer Pasha crossed the Danube long after he might have been informed of the decision of the Sultan to suspend hostilities. The war itself was proclaimed in opposition to the remonstrances of our Ambassador; and we have recently informed the Porte that a cessation of hostilities is indispensable for the continuance of our negotiations. If the Turks should reject our advice, and should be obstinately bent on war when we are labouring for peace, I confess that I am not disposed to sacrifice our freedom of action, and to permit ourselves to be dragged into a war by a Government which has

lost the requisite control over its own subjects, and is obliged to act under the pressure of popular dictation. Such a sacrifice on our part could scarcely be expected, even if we had entered into treaty engagements with a powerful and civilised State; but, without any such engagements to submit, against our better judgment, to be directed by a Government like that of Turkey seems altogether preposterous. Notwithstanding the favourable opinion entertained by many, I have no belief whatever in the improvement of the Turks. It is true that under the pressure of the moment benevolent decrees may be issued, but which, except under the eye of some Foreign Minister, are entirely neglected. Their whole system is radically vicious and abominable. I do not refer to fables which may be invented at St. Petersburg or Vienna, but to numerous despatches of Lord Stratford himself and of our own consuls, who describe a frightful picture of lawless oppression and cruelty. This is so true that, if war should continue, and the Turkish armies meet with disaster, we may expect to see the Christian population of the Empire rise against their oppressors, and in such a case it could hardly be proposed to employ the British force in the Levant to assist in compelling their return under a Mahommedan yoke.

It is not to be doubted, as you truly observe, that a cause espoused by England and France ought to succeed; but the course pursued by these Powers is not exactly such as to ensure this result. If the Turkish cause be so just, and our interest in its success so great, we ought, in common with the Porte, to declare war against Russia, and to put forth the whole power and energy of the State; but practically to carry on war without avowing it is neither doing justice to our ally nor creditable to ourselves. If England and France are afraid to declare open war, they place themselves in a position in which success is no longer certain.

I have no wish to abandon Turkey; on the contrary, I fully concur in the policy which seeks to preserve it; for, whatever may be the opinion I entertain of the Government and the people, I believe that its preservation at this moment is a European necessity. I would, however, endeavour rather to preserve it by peace than by war; for I am satisfied that war, whatever may be its immediate result, is full of danger to the existence of the Turkish Empire.

Be this as it may, I should be perfectly prepared to oppose, even to the extremity of war, the possession by Russia of Constantinople and the Dardanelles, with the approaches to the Mediterranean, and I think that this decision would be justified by English and by European interests. It is true that the Emperor of Russia has invariably declared that he entertains no such projects, and that he would reject any such

proposition; but if a contest should ever arise on this ground, it would probably embrace other objects than the security of the Turkish dominion. It is difficult to say into whose hands these territories would ultimately fall; but whoever might profit by the result, it is to be expected that the Turkish barbarians would speedily disappear, never more to return to a soil upon which, in the face[1] of Christendom, they have so long encamped.

Lord Aberdeen's view of the state of the negotiations at this time is thus given in a letter to Mr. Gladstone of December 3rd:

I think it is impossible that we should meet Parliament without being prepared to lay before it a full account of our proceedings in the East during the recess. There may be much to criticise, but on the whole I am disposed to think that the appearance will not be unfavourable. I agree with you, however, in the opinion that we ought previously to review our own position, and clearly to understand the principles on which we mean to act.

To look at the subject from the commencement: Russia, having put forward a just ground of complaint, subsequently extended this beyond the bounds of moderation, and endeavoured to enforce compliance by a threatened occupation of the Principalities. We first appeared in the East in defence of Constantinople, supposed to be in imminent danger of attack, although, I believe, without the least foundation. This defence we have subsequently extended to the Turkish territory against any direct aggression by sea. We have assumed this defensive character from the first, and still maintain it. If it shall be thought right to persevere in this course, I am at all events of opinion that it will not be wise at present to embark in more active hostilities. Our professed object from the beginning was to secure peace and to prevent the necessity of having recourse to actual war. The Emperor of Russia had most unjustifiably invaded the Principalities, but he had not declared war, and did not require an inch of territory. For some months the Turks determined not to resent this invasion by a declaration of war; and as the Emperor only required certain official assurances from the Porte connected with the privileges of the Greek Church, we employed ourselves in suggesting such forms as the Porte might adopt with safety and the Emperor receive with honour. In this we have hitherto failed; although, if the two parties were acting in good faith, it ought not to be difficult to succeed. We even promised to secure for the Turks by

[1] Originally written '*to the disgrace.*'

negotiation the evacuation of the Principalities, provided they abstained from a formal declaration of war; but they refused to follow our advice. They thought that our ambassadors, with the English and French fleets, were at their service, and that we had no option but to take part in the war.

I do not discuss the Vienna Note with its subsequent modifications, and especially the declaration at Olmütz, which, if received in a fair spirit, might perhaps have led to peace; but it appears by the accounts from Constantinople that our last Note, drawn up under Turkish advice, and with the view of meeting every Turkish object, has also been rejected. Reschid Pasha has officially informed Lord Stratford that if it had arrived two months sooner it would have been accepted. Now, although it may be true that the last two months have made a change in the position of the Turks, I do not see why this change should affect us. We never professed to make common cause with them in a war declared against our advice, but merely to protect them from immediate attack. Our object was to obtain peace by a restoration of the *status quo*, and in consideration of a declaration to be addressed to the Emperor of Russia by the Porte.

It will be important to keep this in view, for we shall probably have new demands made upon us of a very different description. Our last attempt at Constantinople has been to make the Turks declare on what terms they would be willing to treat for peace. I expect something unreasonable; perhaps not the restoration of the Crimea or Bessarabia, but certainly not the renewal of treaties and the *status quo*. Whatever these terms may be, can it be maintained that we ought to support them in opposition to the basis laid down by ourselves, and through all the chances of a war declared against our advice, and the declaration of which has rendered abortive our pacific endeavours on behalf of the Porte itself?

The Turks, although barbarous in some respects, are, like all Orientals, cunning enough, and know how to press an advantage. They will do their best to profit by the assistance of England and France, and, if possible, to force us into the adoption of the most decided hostilities.

I expect at the next Cabinet to hear some proposal made for taking a more active part in warlike measures, although without any declaration of war against Russia. No doubt it would be more convenient to avoid this if possible, and by various modes of insult and attack to force Russia to declare war. I think we have gone far enough in this direction; although the situation of affairs has become more critical since Lord Stratford determined to send ships of war into the Black Sea for objects not contemplated in his instructions. The effect it would produce was perfectly well known.

We have now happily established a more decided union and concert of the Four Powers, which will enable us to hold a firm language to Russia, and perhaps induce the Turks to listen to reason, so that peace may still not be impossible.

But, after all, it is the exclusion of Russia, rather than the preservation of the Turks, that we ought to have in view. And it is well not to lose sight of this; for if the war should continue we shall infallibly see a rising of the Christian population, of which indeed there is already some appearance. In that event, do you think there are many who would urge us to fight on the side of our Turkish friends?

Lord Palmerston, some weeks later, suggested that, in the interest of peace, pressure should be put on the Emperor of Russia, by so far assisting the Turks as to prevent Russian ships from leaving Sebastopol. Lord Aberdeen replied:

I take for granted that we both desire to see the termination of the existing war between Russia and the Porte, but I confess I am not at present prepared to adopt the mode which you think most likely to restore peace.

You think that the Emperor ought to be made to evacuate the Principalities, to abandon his demands, and to consent to the revision of the treaties between Russia and Turkey.

The first condition will probably offer no difficulty in the way of peace, as the Emperor has repeatedly declared that he does not desire or intend to retain an inch of Turkish territory.

I agree with you that the Emperor ought to be made to abandon all unjust demands. He has already abandoned much, and will probably abandon more. But, after the former breach of engagement by the Turks, he has some right to expect a reasonable assurance by a diplomatic act, against the recurrence of this violation of good faith, as well as that the Greek Christians should be duly protected. This claim has been put forward from the commencement of the negotiations, and to this we have repeatedly advised the Turks to accede, without prejudice to the sovereign rights of the Sultan.

With regard to the third condition, it is vain to expect that Russia will ever agree to the revision of her former treaties with the Porte, unless reduced to the last extremity; and if Omer Pasha, instead of having only crossed the Danube, had advanced to Moscow, such a proposition would scarcely have been entertained.

Neither do I see that Europe has any great interest in procuring such a revision. Peace has been maintained between Russia and the Porte for the last five and twenty years, since the Treaty of Adrianople, and if renewed it may continue as long.

The interpretation of treaties, which impose a moral obliga-

tion upon one of the parties, will always be open to doubt and cavil; but the substitution of the Great Powers instead of Russia, as you propose, would probably render the execution of such stipulations still more complicated and uncertain.

You admit that, in order to bring the Emperor to agree to these terms of peace, 'it is necessary to exert a considerable pressure upon him.' Now what you call a considerable pressure, I can only regard as war. And it is a sort of war which I do not think very creditable to the honour and character of this country. If the conduct of Russia has been so injurious to the Porte, and our own interests are so deeply affected, as to make us think it necessary to resist her attack, it is not by capturing a few ships or blockading some port that we shall best prove our sympathy; but we ought rather at once to declare war and to make common cause with our ally. We have no treaty engagements with the Porte; and, although I do not pretend to say to what extremities we may be driven by the course of events, I do not believe that the people of this country are prepared to make such a sacrifice, or that our national honour and interests are so much concerned, as would make it justifiable in us to incur all the risks and horrors of war.

Much as I desire to avoid war, and reluctant as I am to prolong that which already exists between Russia and the Porte by aiming at unattainable conditions of peace, I would not have you imagine that under no circumstances should I be prepared to have recourse to such an alternative. I think that Russia could never be permitted to occupy Constantinople and the Straits of the Dardanelles; and if it became evident that any such intention was entertained, I believe that the interests of this country and Europe would justify us in resorting at once to the most active hostilities.

Allow me to recall your attention to our actual position with respect to the pending negotiations for peace. We have just effected the union of the Four Powers, and their cordial concurrence in the steps about to be taken for arriving at this great end. I regard this union as a most important fact, and as calculated essentially to affect our proceedings, whether they terminate in war or peace. We ought not rashly to endanger the permanence of this European concert; and as the Powers have declared that the integrity of the Turkish territory is an object of general interest, it is to be presumed that they will take such means as may be necessary to secure it. But if, while we have sent pacific overtures to Constantinople, and are endeavouring as mediators to establish an armistice between the belligerents, we should ourselves have recourse to acts of direct hostility, we can scarcely expect that our allies would approve of such a decision. I greatly doubt whether even the French Government would think it just or honourable to join us in such a course.

Even now, the terms of a treaty of peace between the Porte and Russia might not improbably have been satisfactorily arranged; but on December 12, 1853, England was startled by the first rumours of the battle of Sinope. They were not generally credited; but on the 14th fuller details, amply confirmed, appeared in all the newspapers. Looked at in the light of after years, there was nothing in the battle of Sinope to justify the outcry of horror which it called forth. Russia and Turkey were at war—a war declared not by Russia but by Turkey. When nations are at war, an attack on the fleet of one belligerent by the fleet of the other is not only justifiable but to be expected, nor does the number of ships sunk or captured, the completeness of the victory, or the fact that the enemy's fleet was at anchor in one of its own ports, affect the legitimate character of the action. Less than thirty years before, an English fleet, in conjunction with those of France and Russia, had destroyed the Turkish navy in a Turkish harbour, and that at a time when both England and France were at peace with Turkey. But that 'untoward event' had been as much lauded and rejoiced over in England as the untoward event of Sinope was denounced and shuddered at. The English public did not trouble itself to inquire into the legal or technical character of the transaction. It had taken the Turks into its friendship, and now saw its friends worsted. It dubbed the battle a massacre, and called for vengeance.[1] Up to the beginning of October the feeling of the public had been

[1] It is not uninteresting, as an evidence of changed public opinion, to compare a cartoon published in 'Punch' at this time, with one which appeared in the summer of 1877. In the former, Lord Aberdeen exclaims, 'I'm afraid I must let him go,' as he holds back by the mane the British lion, which, in a rampant attitude, is struggling to free himself for a dash forward upon the Russian bear. In the latter, a number of journalists are depicted vainly striving to rouse, with the points of their pens, the same lion from his majestic repose.

decidedly pacific. During the two months which followed it underwent a considerable change, and now burst into a flame of furious passion. The *Times*, which, in close concert with Lord Aberdeen, had until this time done its best to allay popular excitement, now went over to the other camp, and clamoured for 'decided measures' as loudly as any other journal.

The Turkish ships were sunk, burnt, or captured; but they had effected the purpose for which they had been sent into the Black Sea. At the price of a huge loss of Turkish lives the Sultan had practically secured the support of England in his contest with Russia. The Porte could now, without exciting any apprehension among those eager for war, afford to express its willingness to make peace on the most reasonable terms, and it accordingly assented to the transmission to St. Petersburg of propositions which, if made a month earlier, would have closed the discussion.

Unhappily, Sinope made a great change in the attitude of the French Government, and before the Turkish acceptance of the proposed convention was known in England a resolution had been taken at its instance—it may almost be said at its dictation—which, by offering a grievous affront to the Emperor of Russia, went far to render the preservation of peace impossible. The Emperor Louis Napoleon called on England to send her fleets into the Black Sea, and announced that, if she did not, he would either send the French fleet there alone, or recall it to Toulon. The entrance of the fleet into the Black Sea had already been conditionally sanctioned, in the event of its being necessary for the protection of Turkish territory, or if the Russians crossed the Danube. Telegraphic intelligence was at this juncture received in London stating that the entry of the fleets had already been effected. This was false, but it produced the desired effect.

Pressed as the measure was by France, its approval, if already practically adopted, could not be avoided, and Lord Aberdeen consented to it, on the condition that all hostilities, whether on the part of Turk or Russian, were equally prohibited. This he thought would obviate the otherwise inevitable danger of a collision between the Turkish and Russian fleets, in the presence of English ships, which would certainly take the part of the Turks, and thus commence hostilities with Russia.

Meanwhile the negotiation had proceeded, and with better hopes of success. A form of treaty was prepared which the Turks agreed to, which all the Four Powers were prepared to recommend to Russia, and which there was every reason to think that Russia would substantially accept. But on January 4, 1854, the French and English fleets entered the Black Sea. Russia was not now prepared to close with terms which till then she would have accepted readily. But her course was still temperate, and she called for explanations as to the entry of the Black Sea in a tone which showed that she did not desire a rupture, and that if similar restrictions were imposed on both belligerents, the Czar was not indisposed to pass over the affront without actively resenting it.

Even yet the cause of peace was not wholly desperate. The Four Powers were again entirely united as to the terms to be proposed to Russia, and which in their opinion Russia could and should honourably accept. Turkey (however tardily) had subscribed to these terms, and they appeared to comply essentially with the declarations made by the Emperor of Russia at Olmütz. If these terms were accepted peace was saved.

So late as January 12, 1854, Lord Aberdeen wrote:

Most welcome intelligence has arrived from Vienna by telegraph, from which it appears that the Turkish Government had

agreed to the propositions of the representatives at Constantinople. The conference at Vienna were unanimously of opinion that the answer was sufficiently favourable to authorise Count Buol to send it off at once to St. Petersburg for the acceptance of the Emperor. The objections of the Emperor will apply more to the proposed form of proceeding than to the substance of the proposal itself. He will probably resist the notion of being summoned like a criminal before what he calls La Police Correctionnelle of Europe. Should a real desire exist on both sides to arrive at peace, these difficulties of form may be overcome.

But no such desire existed on the part of the Porte, the French Emperor, the English people, or, I fear it must be added, the English Cabinet. Well might Lord Aberdeen, speaking of his colleagues, exclaim in the words of David: 'I labour for peace, but when I speak unto them thereof, they make them ready for battle.'

The answer returned by France and England to the Russian demand for explanations as to the entrance of their fleets into the Black Sea was couched in terms which were not conciliatory, and which showed that, though the Turks would be restrained from active hostilities, it was intended to impose greater restrictions on the action of Russia than on that of Turkey. The Russian ministers were accordingly withdrawn from Paris and London.

It was not, however, improbable, nay, it seemed even likely, that Russia would yield to the united pressure of Europe, especially when in so doing she would give up nothing she possessed, nor do anything inconsistent with her previous declarations. It is well known that the Emperor seriously hesitated whether he should not do so, and we learn from the Russian 'Diplomatic Study,' that the non-acceptance of the Vienna proposals, as they stood, was subsequently deeply regretted at St. Petersburg. Finally, the Emperor Nicholas took what seemed to him a middle course. He accepted, or professed to accept, the substance of five

of the seven Vienna proposals, but with certain reserves. He required that the negotiations for peace should be carried on directly between Russia and Turkey, either at St. Petersburg or at the headquarters of the Russian Army, and that the evacuation of the Principalities should only take place on the conclusion of peace.

Lord Aberdeen, though he had entertained hopes that Russia would have accepted without change the terms proposed at Vienna, had contemplated the probability of some such modifications being proposed. He did not think their discussion unreasonable, and would have been prepared to negotiate upon them had that course been advocated by the Austrian Cabinet, as he firmly anticipated it would be. The state of public opinion in England, and the views of nearly the whole Cabinet, made it impossible to hope that anything short of the unqualified acceptance by Russia of the Vienna proposals could now avert war; but it would have been easy for Lord Aberdeen to have relieved himself of responsibility by insisting on acquiescence in the proposal of Austria for further negotiation, and retiring from office if his views were overruled. What, then, was his surprise to find that Austria not only at once rejected the Russian reserves as inadmissible, but herself proposed that their rejection should be followed up by a summons to Russia to evacuate the Principalities forthwith—a measure which was practically a conditional declaration of war.

There can be no doubt that, when this proposal was made, the Austrian Cabinet intended to take part in the war which must be the inevitable result of its adoption; and it is equally certain that, when the 'summons' was despatched from England, Lord Aberdeen and Lord Clarendon were under that impression. Either Lord Westmorland failed to detect or he failed to report any change in the

intentions of the Austrian Government; and it was with surprise and disappointment that, *when the summons was actually gone*, the English Cabinet learnt that it was only diplomatic support which it would receive from Vienna. What was the cause of this retreat has never been fully known. At the time, those who, like Lord Palmerston, and some other members of the Cabinet, were prejudiced by rooted suspicion and dislike of Austria, saw in it clear proof of an understanding between the two Emperors. Time, and the disclosure of documents, have shown this notion to be wholly unfounded. It is more probable that the King of Prussia, who was bound by treaty with Austria to succour the latter Power with his whole force in the event of her being attacked by Russia, intimated to the Emperor Francis Joseph that he had entered into a similar obligation towards Russia should Austria be the assailant. To make war with Russia with the support of all Europe was one matter; to do so under such conditions as those now suggested was quite another. To resist at once an invasion of Hungary by Russia, and of Bohemia by Prussia, as well as the invasion (in such an event but too probable) of Lombardy by Sardinia, was more than the Cabinet of Vienna could prudently undertake, and her active support was, for the time at least, reduced to a benevolent neutrality. The 'summons' remained unanswered, and France and England alone declared war against Russia on March 28, 1854.

Lord Aberdeen, Sir James Graham, Mr. Gladstone—the most pacific members of the Cabinet—all assented to the issue of this declaration, and assisted in its preparation. It is well that we should pause to inquire how such a result became possible.

Lord Aberdeen was of opinion that the possession, or even occupation of Constantinople by Russia would be

a menace to Europe, and would seriously affect British interests. He held from the first that any advance on the part of Russia, rendering the danger of such occupation imminent, should be resisted, and that, if necessary, by force. He did not suppose the Emperor Nicholas to entertain any such design; but he thought it not improbable that he might seek to acquire rights of interference in Turkey, and of influence over its Christian subjects, which the Porte could not safely grant, and the refusal of which might easily lead to events which would place Constantinople in danger. Such claims, however, he believed, would not be persisted in by Russia, if decidedly disapproved by the four other Great Powers of Europe. Menace on the part of England alone, or even on that of England and France combined, was not, he thought, likely to intimidate, whilst it was certain to irritate, the Czar, and equally certain to increase the reluctance of Austria and Prussia to co-operate in the exercise of that combined pressure which Lord Aberdeen regarded as irresistible. It therefore appeared to him essential that any expression of doubt as to the pacific intentions of the Russian Court (whether they were really trusted or not) should be carefully avoided; that a rigid control should be maintained over the action of Turkey, certain, if left to itself, to precipitate a contest; and that the Four Powers should adopt resolute and identical language at St. Petersburg, in which the intimation of a desire to see the just complaints of Russia redressed should be combined with a clear indication of united resistance to the acquisition by Russia of new and objectionable powers within the Turkish Empire. The great majority of the Cabinet (indeed, at first, the whole of it) agreed with Lord Aberdeen as to the soundness of this policy, and could it have been steadily pursued, the Russian

demands would probably have been reduced to perfectly safe dimensions without recourse to the extremity of war.[1]

This policy was never lost sight of by Lord Aberdeen and his friends, but whilst all the Cabinet were agreed that a Russian attack on Constantinople would compel Great Britain, even if she stood alone, to take up arms against her, and that it was expedient meanwhile to act in concert not only with France but with the powers of Central Europe, a divergence of opinion soon arose as to what was to be considered an attack on Constantinople, and what degree of importance was to be attached to European concert.

From the outset, the varying impulses, personal objects, and uncertain faith of the French Emperor made such concert difficult; but in the beginning there was no divergence of opinion in the English Cabinet. The decision that the fleet should not leave Malta was an unanimous one, and though Lord Palmerston, a little later, recommended its advance to the Dardanelles, he withdrew that recommendation and, as has been shown on page 227, assented to Lord Aberdeen's policy of quiescence, in which Lord John Russell also agreed. But they both gravely underrated the importance of close union and concert on the part of the Four Powers, and, from various causes, subsequently became impatient, as did some other members of the Cabinet, for more active

[1] That Russia was justly entitled to require that the privileges previously granted to the Christian subjects of the Porte, and guaranteed by Treaties, should be rehearsed and renewed, and that a solemn confirmation of them should be given by the Sultan and formally communicated to Russia, was admitted; but that the guardianship and enforcement of these privileges should rest with Russia and not with the Sovereign who granted them, and that the privileges granted to *foreign* members of other Christian Churches should be equally enjoyed by the millions of Turkish subjects belonging to the Greek Church, appeared to the Cabinets of Vienna and Berlin, as well as to those of Paris and London, inconsistent with the maintenance of the Sultan's independent authority.

demonstrations of sympathy with the Porte than the two Central Powers of Europe were at the time prepared to make.

Lord Palmerston believed sincerely in the regeneration of Turkey, and suspected Russia of the most sinister designs. He was therefore disposed to consider Constantinople constructively attacked by any hostilities whatever between Russia and the Porte. He detested the Austrian Government, and disliked the idea of waiting for its concurrence—perhaps that of any concert at all with Austria which would render the encouragement of revolutionary outbreaks in Lombardy, Hungary, and Poland impossible. Nor had he any great fear or horror of war, or any strong sense of the advantage of German alliances. To his easy optimism it seemed a light task for England and France united to overcome the forces of Russia.

Though he did not fully sympathise with Lord Palmerston's aspirations, Lord John Russell also but imperfectly appreciated the strength and value of European concert. A patriotic Englishman, he had no misgivings as to the power, as well as right, of England to act alone. His peculiar position made him also very sensitive to the strictures of the press and the possible censure of Parliament, and he was anxious not only to take such steps as would preserve peace, but such as would conciliate public opinion. In his opinion, Constantinople should be deemed attacked if a Russian soldier crossed the Danube.

The position of Lord Aberdeen and those who agreed with him was a peculiar one. They formed a large majority in the Cabinet. In the ordinary course of things any resolution arrived at by them would have been at once acted on, and any dissentient member of the Cabinet must have acquiesced in the steps adopted, or resigned. But the resignation of

Lord John Russell would have destroyed the Government, and thus probably have made inevitable that very calamity of war which it was desired to prevent. On every occasion of difference with him, therefore, Lord Aberdeen and the majority of the Cabinet had to consider how far they could, without sacrificing their own policy, agree to meet his wishes. The case was not that of individuals reluctantly remaining members of a Cabinet from the policy of which they dissented, but that of a Cabinet striving to meet the scruples and hesitation of some of its members. The disposition to do so may have been carried too far, but it is by no means clear at what moment it would have been right to accept a rupture, or at which indeed it would not have been wrong to throw away those chances of peace which still existed, and which would have been sacrificed had Lord Aberdeen, Mr. Gladstone, and Sir James Graham quitted the Cabinet. And if it be not easy, even now, to pronounce at what particular moment a decided stand should have been made against any further step in support of Turkey, it was yet more difficult to do so during the progress of the negotiation. I myself regret that such a stand was not made before the Turkish declaration of war, and that Lord Aberdeen did not press to the last extremity his proposal that the Turks should be plainly told that they must not expect the assistance of Great Britain in a war commenced in defiance of her advice. It afforded almost the last chance of recovering any real freedom of action, and, although the Government might have been broken up, Lord Aberdeen's course would have been intelligible and consistent. Could he have relied on the support of Lord John Russell, he would doubtless have insisted on this intimation being given to the Porte. He was prepared to disregard the secession of Lord Palmerston, and the probability of expulsion from

office on the re-assembling of Parliament; for he was confident that he could, in the interval, effect an arrangement which, once effected, would not be subsequently disturbed, although its authors might be overwhelmed by popular disapprobation. But the retirement of Lord John would have involved the dissolution of the Government, and the dissolution of the Government necessarily involved war. On the whole, therefore, he thought (and those on whom he most relied for advice thought with him) that the interests of peace would be best served by attempting to gain, though by a less perfect road, the immediate object he had in view, —the prevention of acts of open hostility between the Russian and Turkish forces. I am less able to understand his acquiescence in the modification introduced by Lord John into the instructions actually sent, and which practically defeated the intention of the Cabinet that the Turkish Government should abstain from the commencement of hostilities during the continuance of the negotiations to which it was desired to give free play. I can only conjecture that, glad and surprised to find Lord John assent to his proposal, the seemingly trivial verbal modification passed almost without Lord Aberdeen's notice, if indeed he was cognisant of it. That the Divan would make that use of it which they did was certainly not contemplated by Lord Aberdeen, nor by Lord John himself. By the insertion of the words 'a reasonable time,' the latter wished to guard against frivolous delays, which he apprehended on the part of Russia, desirous, as he supposed, to postpone the commencement of hostilities till the spring; but he had no intention of intimating to the Turks that by postponing operations for a fortnight they would fully comply with the wishes of the British Government. But for subsequent events this wilful misunderstanding of the purport of the

English demand would probably have been made the ground for refusing assistance to Turkey.

Concessions, however, to colleagues at home, and to the exigencies of the French Emperor, need not necessarily have resulted in war, had the cause of peace been zealously served by the British Ambassador at Constantinople. Unfortunately, it was not.

Lord Stratford de Redcliffe possessed great abilities and great acquirements, but his hatred and dread of Russian influence in Turkey bore a character of fanaticism. Nor was his temperament that of a mediator and peacemaker. He was a man of strong will and of imperious and hasty temper, impatient of control, and little accustomed to heed instructions he disapproved. He probably thought that in formally complying with them he did all that strict duty required of him. Of the highest personal integrity, chivalrous and honourable above other men, he yet allowed himself, where he conceived national interests to be at stake, to disregard the spirit, while he obeyed the letter, of the instructions he received. No doubt, he deemed that he had a higher duty to perform towards the nation he represented than to the Ministry which he for the time served. It may even be that, in the absorbing interest of each step in the game, the exact nature of the part he was playing never fully presented itself to him. He knew too, and perhaps took into account, the fact that some members of the British Cabinet shared his own views, and had but reluctantly acquiesced in the instructions which he ostensibly obeyed and virtually disregarded. But whatever the motives by which he was actuated (and none that are not high and noble should be attributed to him) it is not the less the case that a large—perhaps the largest—share of responsibility for the Crimean War must rest upon Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. Voluntarily,

or involuntarily, he allowed it to be perceived that he thought the Porte would act wisely in rejecting the advice of which he was the official mouthpiece. He encouraged the not unnatural desire of the Sultan 'to strike off the fetters of Kainardji and Adrianople' and 'settle accounts with Russia once for all;'[1] and those about him had no doubt that he hoped for a war which he believed would humiliate Russia and give new life to the Ottoman Empire.[2] Nor is it easy to read his despatches without arriving at the same conclusion.

It has been asked, and not unreasonably, why, if all this was known to the Cabinet, his recall was not insisted on? But to this measure Lord John Russell, Lord Palmerston, and several of their colleagues would not have consented. Their resignation would have dissolved the Cabinet, and the dissolution of the Cabinet, as I have already pointed out, meant war. In these circumstances, nothing short of a conviction that Lord Stratford's further stay at Constantinople rendered the continuance of peace impossible would have justified his recall; and of this Lord Aberdeen was not convinced. On the contrary, 'by great prudence and watchfulness, and with careful instructions,' he 'hoped that mischief might be prevented;' and after anxiously considering with Lord Clarendon the balance of dangers, they decided that it was safer to run the risks involved in Lord Stratford's retention

[1] Lord Stratford's own words.

[2] I was told by the late Dr. H. Sandwith, C.B., that, on receiving the news of the battle of Sinope, Lord Stratford exclaimed in a loud voice, 'Thank God, that's WAR.' I have heard this also from General Sir F. (then Colonel) Williams; but, though intimately acquainted with all that passed at the Embassy, he was not at that moment with Lord Stratford, which Dr. Sandwith was. According to Lord Malmesbury's *Memoirs* (not always a safe authority), vol. i. p. 425, and Greville's *Diaries*, 3rd series, vol. ii. p. 140, Lord Stratford said much the same to Lord Bath, on the entry of the fleets into the Black Sea.

of his Embassy than to incur those attending an attempt, probably ineffectual, to recall him. Their 'watchfulness,' however, did not prevent the prospect of war being at more than one critical moment brought perceptibly nearer by what Lord Stratford did or refrained from doing.

Nevertheless, the policy which would have preserved peace unless Russia were prepared to defy all Europe might yet have been successfully adhered to, had it not been for the growth in England of a popular cry for war. Its progress was at first slow; but after the beginning of October 1853 it spread very rapidly, and soon assumed an intensity which it is now hard to realise. No one who has failed to study carefully the newspapers of that day—perhaps those only who personally recollect the state of opinion at that time—can have any idea of the enthusiasm and unanimity displayed. Whigs and Tories and Radicals, men and women, young and old, orators on the platform and preachers in the pulpit, vied with one another in denunciations of the ambition of Russia and of the supineness of the Government in resisting its encroachments. A few members of the Cabinet and a few dispassionate men out of office, such as Lord Grey, Bright, and Cobden, strove in vain to recall the nation to a sense of the losses and risks involved in war, and the inadequacy of the motives for incurring them, but they were unheeded, or heard only with irritation and impatience. When for a moment it was believed that the Emperor Nicholas had accepted the whole of the Vienna proposals of January 1854, a cry of disappointment that 'the beggar would not fight' rang through the land. Those who still preached peace were branded as men indifferent to the honour of the country, if not indeed something worse; and absurd as was the impulse which attracted crowds to Tower Hill to witness the committal of the Prince Consort and Lord

Aberdeen to the Tower, the very fact that such gatherings were possible is sufficient to show the popular excitement, and the degree of exasperation which prevailed against those who were supposed to hinder the commencement of hostilities. Lord Aberdeen deplored the popular fury and its probable results, but his judgment was not influenced by it. He had no sympathy with the feelings which at an earlier period had led Lord Clarendon, though agreeing with Lord Aberdeen in principle and loyally supporting him in the Cabinet, to recommend that he should allow the fleet to be sent to the Dardanelles, as being 'the least measure that would satisfy public opinion' and one that might 'do some good to ourselves, which ought not to be our last consideration.' When Lord Palmerston about the same time, and in reference to the same step, wrote, 'I am confident that the country expects this course, and I cannot believe that we should receive anything but support in pursuing it from the party now in opposition,' Lord Aberdeen replied: 'I have not the least doubt that the country and the party of opposition in the House of Commons would be delighted if we took such a step. But the country would not look to the consequences, and the Opposition would only anticipate our speedy overthrow. In a case of this kind I dread popular support.'

But the force of public opinion had a powerful effect on the Cabinet at large. Several of those who had shared Lord Aberdeen's views went over to the side of immediate war. Even those to whom he most looked for assistance considered the whole blame of the rupture to rest upon the Emperor Nicholas, on account of his refusal of the terms of agreement sent from Vienna in January 1854, and urged the immediate despatch to St. Petersburg of the summons to evacuate the Principalities which had been suggested by

Austria. To this Lord Aberdeen assented, believing it to be the seal of that European concert as to which he was so anxious, and from which he looked for such great results. Having once assented to it, it was impossible for him to dissent from its inevitable consequences, even though he found it was not to receive the support on which he had counted. The summons had gone with his consent, and being unanswered, he could not but concur in the declaration of war which followed. He did so with a heavy heart. 'The abstract justice of the cause,' he wrote to Lord John Russell, 'although indisputable, is but a poor consolation for the inevitable calamities of all war, or for a decision which I am not without fear may prove to have been impolitic and unwise. My conscience upbraids me the more because, seeing, as I did from the first, all that was to be apprehended, it is possible that, by a little more energy and vigour, not on the Danube, but in Downing Street, it might have been prevented.' He admitted that war was now inevitable, while with his whole soul he longed to be relieved from the burden of conducting it. But he decided that, on the whole, it would be better for the interests of peace, and, as he believed, of England, that he should remain at his post. So long as he did so, the war would not be converted into an engine for remodelling the map of Europe. He was more likely than any other man to secure that co-operation of Austria to which he looked for bringing the war to a speedy close; and if the war fever subsided, which he believed it would do as rapidly as it had arisen, it would be well that the Government should have at its head a man determined to seize the first opportunity for concluding an honourable peace. Lord Aberdeen on this as on other occasions undertook manfully a task he loathed. In so doing he may have been right

or he may have been mistaken; but he certainly never gave a greater example of that quiet self-sacrifice to a sense of duty which through life distinguished him.

War once declared, Lord Aberdeen's main object was the early re-establishment of peace. This, he perceived, could only be effected by accomplishing the objects for which the war was undertaken; and to do this he thought it necessary to keep those objects steadily in view to the exclusion of all others; to prosecute the war vigorously; and, above all, to unite the forces of Austria with those of the two Powers already engaged in the contest.

To all that would widen the scope of the war, or direct it to other objects than those it was originally undertaken to effect, he was immovably opposed. It was not to restore Finland to Sweden, or the Crimea to Turkey; it was not to make Poland independent, or to transfer Lombardy from the Emperor of Austria to the King of Sardinia, that England had gone to war. To ensure the security of Turkey, Lord Aberdeen had reluctantly consented to the commencement of hostilities. He was not prepared to continue them for other purposes. Moreover, he thought, and thought justly, that the expedition to the Crimea would tax all the resources of this country, and that it was the reverse of sound policy, until Sebastopol had fallen, to undertake other enterprises.

Lord Aberdeen's abhorrence of exaggeration, his inability to simulate passionate resentment which he did not feel, or apprehensions which he did not share, and his determination to confine the war to its original objects, not unnaturally produced an impression of half-heartedness in its prosecution, which rendered him highly unpopular. A nation at war is not disposed to regard the case of its opponent judicially or dispassionately, and the Emperor Nicholas was for the

moment regarded by the British public with as much alarm and hatred as had ever been the case with Bonaparte himself. Lord Aberdeen considered the Russian pretensions inadmissible, and the cause of Turkey just; but he had no apprehensions of Russia as an European power, and no sympathy with those who would have undertaken a crusade for her destruction. When, therefore, Lord Lyndhurst, in the House of Lords, pronounced a vehement philippic against the Czar, and made an impassioned appeal to his hearers on behalf of the liberties of Europe, threatened by the encroachments of Russia, Lord Aberdeen, in replying to him, expressed his exact thoughts and opinions with the most transparent openness. Read now, his speech would probably appear to most men unexceptionable. His sentiments were in fact those of more than one of his colleagues, but their avowal raised a storm of obloquy which he had some difficulty in fully understanding. That the conduct of the Russian Government should be impartially considered was not to be borne; and it was not unnaturally supposed that Lord Aberdeen, feeling no strong animosity against Russia, and anxious to restore peace, would shrink from prosecuting the war with decision and vigour.

But this belief, however natural, was altogether mistaken. Lord Aberdeen held in the strongest manner that peace would be the more speedily obtained the heavier and more rapid were the blows struck by the allies; and, in the language of Sir James Graham, 'he was ever ready to listen to the most decided counsels, and give effect to the boldest enterprises.' On the evacuation of the Principalities, therefore, he was one of those who most warmly advocated the immediate invasion of the Crimea.

The war with Russia is known by the name of the Crimean War, and it is almost forgotten that it had already

lasted six months before the expedition to the Crimea was undertaken. During those six months the progress of the allies had been eminently successful. When, in March, war was declared, the Russian forces were on the Danube, and it was expected that the country south of the Balkan would be the scene of the campaign. By July there was not a Russian soldier upon Turkish soil, and preparations were already on foot for the invasion of Russia. In the north, the Aland Islands had been seized the moment the navigation of the Baltic was possible. A great fortress (Bomarsund) had been destroyed, battle had been offered to the Russian fleet at the very doors of the capital, and the way lay open to a series of brilliant operations. That they were not even attempted, was due to the strange and unexpected caution of an admiral whose previous career had certainly not been distinguished by that quality. The rapid despatch of the army to the East, the successful landing of the allied forces in the Crimea, the brilliant victory of the Alma, the commencement of the siege of Sebastopol, and the anticipation of its speedy end, caused general exultation; and when on his passage through Aberdeen, early in October, on his way to spend a few days at Haddo, Lord Aberdeen was presented with a congratulatory address, he was told by Sir James Graham that his answer should be 'a song of triumph.' The personal unpopularity, which attached to him for his supposed want of sympathy with the popular enmity to Russia, was for the time swallowed up in the satisfaction caused by these achievements; and on the fall of Sebastopol, which was then daily expected, it was Lord Aberdeen's intention to dissolve Parliament, a step which at that moment would undoubtedly have secured a large ministerial majority. But during the next three months the favour which the Government had

temporarily acquired with the public was rapidly lost. The first and perhaps chief cause for this change of sentiment may be found in the fact that for a whole week a false report of the fall of Sebastopol was universally believed. Even when it was found that its capture had not yet been effected, it was supposed to be immediately imminent; and an impatience for the speedy close of the siege was thus created which would not otherwise have existed, and the disappointment of which excited irritation and complaint. These feelings were intensified by the accounts received, and made public, of the privations under which for a time the army suffered, and for which the Government at home was naturally held responsible; while dissatisfaction was increased by the injudicious publicity given to all the grumbling and hasty censure of the camp.

The conditions under which intelligence from the seat of war was given to the public were singularly unfortunate. No English army had previously been attended by newspaper correspondents. Never before had there been so many men in the ranks who could write, and never before had there been such facilities at home for the publication of soldiers' letters. On the other hand, the checks upon the amount and character of the information furnished, which have since been imposed, had not then been devised. The newspaper correspondents stood in no recognised relation to the Head-Quarters Staff, and were practically under no control; while the ignorant and often hostile criticism contained in the letters of subalterns and sergeants was published without reserve, and greedily swallowed by the public. Had the Duke of Wellington's campaigns in the Peninsula been conducted under like conditions, it may be questioned whether they would ever have been allowed to reach their glorious conclusion. But the Duke's army

was not accompanied by journalists; the number of private soldiers who wrote letters was then comparatively small, and the letters of officers to their families were not scattered broadcast with the same want of reticence as in 1854. In later campaigns, confusion as to transmission and disposal of stores little if at all inferior to that in the Crimea has not been unknown; but means had then been found of more carefully concealing it from the public eye. At the time of the Crimean War the period when an army in the field was silent was over; that of judicious censorship had not begun. The publicity given to the state of the camp made the hardships endured by the army during November and December appear greater than in fact they really were, and greater than those of other armies, which in former campaigns had suffered at least as much, but in silence. A part of these hardships were only such as must inevitably attend every army engaged in a winter campaign at a great distance from its base of operations. But besides these there were real hardships, which were more or less preventible, and it was perfectly natural that the Government at home should have been held responsible for them, though in fact little to blame. There was no parsimony in the despatch of stores from England. Few at all realise the magnitude of the blow inflicted by the loss of the transports in the gale of November 13th. For the delay in delivery at the front, owing to the condition of the road, the local authorities were responsible, and so soon as a knowledge of the truth reached England the construction of a railway was resolved on.

Lord Aberdeen believed that the pressure which Russia would most feel would be the junction of Austria with the allies; but in his efforts to secure such united action he met with little support or sympathy. The sincerity of

Austria was doubted. It was supposed by some that she was secretly aiding Russia and was unfriendly to the allies; while those who wished, as some did, to carry on the war for Polish and Italian objects, preferred her enmity to her friendship. Even Lord Clarendon, who was not one of these, and who loyally acted with Lord Aberdeen, expressed himself as 'sorry' that a treaty with Austria should be contemplated, and predicted that she would never be brought to sign a secret article fixing a date for the commencement of her active co-operation. But the treaty was concluded, and the secret article signed; and the immediate effect of this step was to compel Russia to accept the basis of peace proposed by the allies, to which Austria had given her adhesion. After some discussion it was agreed, at the beginning of the year 1855, that, while hostilities were not to cease, conferences for peace should be opened at Vienna.

Lord Aberdeen now saw a real prospect of the restoration of peace. He believed that it might be made on terms which would fully attain the objects of the war. That a peace made while Sebastopol was yet untaken would be fatal to the Government which made it he had little doubt, although, if Lord John Russell were the negotiator—as Lord Aberdeen meant that he should be—he considered it possible that terms accepted by Lord John might be accepted by the country. For this, however, he cared comparatively little; he at all events saw his own way clear. Only a day or two before the reassembling of Parliament in January 1855 he told the writer that, for the first time since the commencement of the war, he now had hopes of the conclusion of a rational peace, and that if it were effected he should not regret having remained minister. But even if peace were not made, as he would certainly be no party to insisting on the acceptance of unreasonable conditions, he saw a prospect of

his own deliverance from bondage. He was more cheerful and more hopeful than he had been at any time since the war began. A few days later, his hopes of peace, or of securing at least an honourable retreat from office, were destroyed by the sudden, and at that moment unexpected, secession of Lord John Russell from the Cabinet; the votes of whose followers, combined with those of the regular opposition, carried Mr. Roebuck's motion for an inquiry into the conduct of the war, and by so doing overthrew Lord Aberdeen's Government. But the causes which led to this result must form the subject of a separate chapter.

CHAPTER X

LORD JOHN RUSSELL AS A COLLEAGUE

Lord John Russell and the Vienna Note—Lord Palmerston's Resignation—Postponement of the Reform Bill—Correspondence respecting the War Office—The Kennedy Affair—Resignation of Lord John Russell—Letter to the Duke of Bedford.

In more than one letter written during the summer of 1852 Lord Aberdeen expressed his opinion that the Government which it would be most for the benefit of the country to form, and which would offer the best prospect of permanence, was one of which Lord John Russell should be the head, but which should include among its members the principal friends and followers of Sir Robert Peel.

That the formation of such a Government was at the moment impossible Lord Aberdeen recognised with regret. That it was impossible was felt by all, save a certain fraction of the old Whig party. Those who saw their own exclusion from the Cabinet threatened, to make room for Peelites, naturally felt aggrieved. Those who, not having yet held it, looked forward to office themselves, deprecated any widening of the circle of selection involving a diminution of their own chances. A certain number of narrow party politicians, too, hated the very thought of combination with men who had long been their opponents, and still sat on the opposite side of the House to themselves. But, to all beyond this restricted though not uninfluential circle, it was apparent that the time had not yet arrived for Lord

John's restoration to the highest seat of power. The just anger of the Roman Catholic body, and the resentment of Lord Palmerston, had been too recently excited, and the distrust of some of the most conspicuous members of the Peelite party was still too strong, to permit the experiment to be made with safety. *With* Lord John, Peelites, Papists, and Palmerston alike might act; *under* him, they as yet could not. As the summer passed, this was more and more clearly seen by those best able to feel the pulse of public opinion, including that very shrewd observer, Lord John's own brother, the Duke of Bedford; and it was acquiesced in by Lord John himself. Lord Aberdeen therefore reluctantly allowed himself to be placed at the head of the new Government. He was the natural leader of the Peelites, who, of course, readily took office under him. He had headed the opposition to the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, and was therefore acceptable to the Roman Catholics and the Irish. If Lord John himself became a member of his Government, no other Whig, if asked, could well refuse to do so; and if Lord Palmerston was willing to serve under so old an opponent as Lord Aberdeen, there were no such personal injuries on either side to forgive as those which stood between Lord Palmerston and Lord John. But in assuming the position, Lord Aberdeen did so with a full intention of using all his influence to bring about ultimately what he considered a better arrangement, whenever it could be effected without breaking up the Government; for this he did not think it would be fair either to the Queen or to his colleagues to do for such an object.

In consenting to serve with and under Lord Aberdeen, Lord John undoubtedly made a great sacrifice to his sense of public duty; but though capable of an act of self-abnegation, Lord John was unable to sustain with equal

magnanimity the position in which he found himself placed by that act. Left to himself, it is probable that the same spirit which had prompted his first generous determination would have sustained him in its execution. Unfortunately, however, some of those who were most about him in private life, and who shared most largely his familiar confidence, were themselves members of that small band of disappointed office-seekers who had sustained the injury of exclusion, and, still worse, the slight of seeing others of their own party preferred to themselves. These men, though counted among its supporters, hated the newly-formed Government with greater hatred than was felt for it by the regular opposition, and, above all things, desired to put an end to what they considered an unnatural combination. They were ever on the watch to point out to Lord John slights which were not intended, to embitter every difference, to dwell on and exaggerate every unfounded bit of gossip, to extol and confirm any hesitation which Lord John felt as to common action with his colleagues. Unfortunately they succeeded but too well.

After a discussion which took place almost immediately after the formation of the Government as to the time for which Lord John should hold the seals of the Foreign Office, Lord Aberdeen told him that so soon as he found the Cabinet prepared to accept Lord John as his successor, it was his intention to 'slip out of office.' This prospect made Lord John for the time less restless, though even during the first six months of 1853 he twice tendered his resignation.

The session closed on August 20th, and closed triumphantly for the Government. Lord Aberdeen thought the time had now come at which his proposal to retire in Lord John's favour might be made to the Cabinet with some

chance of success. It was, therefore, mentioned by him privately to several of his colleagues. Not one of them accepted the suggestion willingly, and in this respect several of Lord John's former friends showed quite as strong a disinclination to the change as Lord Aberdeen's personal adherents. Still, the most important of them had been spoken to and had consented. Mr. Gladstone, however, who was known to be the member of the Government most unlikely to consent, was absent from town. To him Lord Aberdeen wrote, saying that it was essential that he should see him for the discussion of a matter of the most urgent importance, and appointed a day on which to meet him at Haddo House.

When that day came, neither Lord Aberdeen nor Mr. Gladstone was at Haddo. Lord Aberdeen was kept in town by the hesitation of the Porte to accept the Vienna Note, and wrote to Mr. Gladstone at Haddo, where he supposed him to be, begging him to remain there a few days till he could himself come down to Scotland after a settlement of the Turkish question. But Mr. Gladstone, who was on a visit at Dunrobin, was detained there for some weeks by serious illness. When he and Lord Aberdeen did meet a month later in London, the whole complexion of affairs was changed.

Lord John had borne, not without impatience, but still had borne, a delay which he trusted would be terminated by his accession to power at the end of the session. Immediately after the prorogation he had intimated to Lord Aberdeen that it was only as its head that he would remain a member of the Government. He had done this in a manner which Lord Aberdeen, considering all his own exertions on Lord John's behalf, thought peremptory and ungracious, but which caused no change in Lord Aberdeen's

intentions. Difficulties, however, which had not been anticipated, arose as to the acceptance of the Vienna Note, and Lord John himself was compelled to admit that Lord Aberdeen's retirement at that moment was impossible. But the disappointment he now sustained overcame his equanimity, and from that time, with the exception of two short intervals of cordiality, to be hereafter mentioned, he seems to have regarded Lord Aberdeen not as the head and chief of the Government of which he was a member, but as an obstacle in the way of his own resumption of what he deemed his proper place.

At the time when the acceptance of the Vienna Note by Russia had seemed to render the continuance of peace certain, Lord John was prepared for the refusal of the Czar to accept any modifications in it. He then wrote to Lord Aberdeen :

> I am very sorry for the wrong-headed answer of the Turks. I think, as you do, that we cannot press the Emperor to accept the modifications, *but we may tell him he will do well to do so*, as it will close the chapter.

Lord John, at the request of Lord Aberdeen and Lord Clarendon, came to London, and conferred with them and Lord Palmerston. Lord Aberdeen wrote to Sir James Graham the same evening of this interview :

> We occupied ourselves a good deal in considering the proceedings which should be adopted by the Conference at Vienna, with a view to induce the Turks to accept the Note, in case the Emperor, *as is most likely*, should reject their proposed modifications. In this we were pretty well agreed.

Lord John returned to Scotland, and on the receipt of the Emperor's refusal of the modifications, Lord Aberdeen wrote to him there as follows :

> Palmerston was with us yesterday, and we agreed to propose at Vienna that the Four Powers should declare that they adopted the Turkish modifications as their own interpretation

of the Note, and that they were prepared to adhere to this interpretation in all time hereafter. This would be a virtual guarantee to the Porte of more value than any they could expect. Indeed the declaration is so strong that I entertain some doubt of its being agreed to by Austria and Prussia. But it is still more doubtful whether Lord Stratford will allow the Turks to accept it.

This was in substance what had been agreed on at their former meeting, and Lord Aberdeen was consequently astonished and dismayed by the receipt in quick succession of two notes from Lord John, one written before and one after the receipt of Lord Aberdeen's letter. In the first he said :

I was in hopes the Emperor might have accepted some of the modifications. I must now conclude . . . that nothing less than the subjection of Turkey will satisfy him. If that is the case the question must be decided by war, and if we do not stop the Russians on the Danube we shall have to stop them on the Indus.

As the rejection of the modifications had all along been expected, and as Lord John had fully agreed that the acceptance of the unmodified Note should nevertheless, in that case, be pressed upon the Porte, this was sufficiently startling. Still more unexpected was the intimation, in reply to Lord Aberdeen's letter, that the 'only hope' he had was

that Turkey may instantly reject such a proposal, but even that will not wipe away the shame of having made it. . . . If the Austrians agree to Clarendon's terms, and forward them to Constantinople, I do not see how I can remain a member of your Government.

On receiving this letter Lord Aberdeen wrote to Sir James Graham :

I fear I must renounce the sanguine view I have hitherto taken of the Eastern Question ; for nothing can be more alarming than the present prospect. I thought that we should have been able to conquer Stratford, but I begin to fear that the reverse will be the case, and that he will succeed in defeating

us all. . . . Although at our wits' end, Clarendon and I are still labouring in the cause of peace; but really to contend at once with the pride of the Emperor, the fanaticism of the Turks, and the dishonesty of Stratford is almost a hopeless attempt. In the meantime, we have had some very curious domestic incidents, which to me are very significant. Very recently, Clarendon and I agreed to make a proposal to the Conference at Vienna, with the view of obtaining a declaration of the Four Powers. This was in substance communicated to Lord John both by Clarendon and by me. He partly misunderstood us both, but he wrote Clarendon a very strong letter, and spoke of the disgrace attending the proposal. He added, that Clarendon must not be surprised if, in the event of its being carried into effect, he must decline to be a party to it. To me he wrote in more civil terms, but said, if the proposal should be adopted, he could no longer remain a member of my Government. Now the comical part of this affair is that we caught Palmerston on his way to Balmoral, and the proposal which has so much excited Lord John's indignation not only had Palmerston's concurrence, but was in great part his own work! Clarendon has been greatly annoyed, and has written very strongly to Lord John. I shall only laugh at him a little. But I told you it was significant; and it seems to me pretty clear that Lord John is determined to go. It is probable that, on reflection, he found the intention of leaving a Government with whom he entirely agreed, and a place which, however exceptional, was of his own making, would put him in a ridiculous point of view, and was in fact an untenable position. It was therefore necessary to have some ground of difference, and the Turkish affair presented one out of which some capital might be made into the bargain. He has made a bad hit this time, but he may be more successful on the next occasion. . . . This Eastern Question affects my own position a good deal. Of course I never took it into my calculation, and concluded that it would be settled some way or other, long before it was necessary for me to act. This may still be the case; and if so, I should have no difficulty; but I should not like to have the appearance of running away from an unfinished question of great importance and of a most complicated description. Personally, I had much rather that Lord John should break up the Government by some such decision as that which he has already announced. But then what is to follow? How I wish that you were here! However, no immediate decision is necessary, and we shall have time to reflect, if not to cousult, before we act. My intercourse with Clarendon is most satisfactory and confidential. He is a little too much afraid of the public and the press, but all his views are sound. Nothing can be more cordial than our footing, which is a great comfort.

And on October 4th he wrote of the Cabinet to be held that afternoon :

> It will be proposed by Lord John, and I believe by Palmerston, to engage as auxiliaries on the side of Turkey, but not as principals in the war. It will be very difficult to establish a distinction of this kind, and in our position I should think impossible. I should much doubt if the law of nations would allow of such a position as he would propose to take up. The practical question will be war or peace ; any other course will not be intelligible. . . . I shall be very glad to hear from you to-morrow on the subject of our domestic affairs. But in truth these are now comparatively of little importance, and the whole affair has assumed an entirely new character. I cannot entertain a doubt that Lord John will seek, and of course will find, an opportunity of breaking off on a popular ground instead of on one ridiculously untenable. Palmerston most undoubtedly will do the same. Indeed, I feel that very possibly I may stand alone. I am almost inclined to hope so.

Far from 'standing alone,' however, Lord Aberdeen found, when the proposition was made, that most of Lord John Russell's friends in the Cabinet, Lord Granville, Sir Charles Wood, etc., joined in its reprobation, and were as decidedly pacific in their views as Lord Aberdeen himself. In these circumstances it was clear that, though Lord John might be able to upset the existing Government, it would be impossible for him to construct a new one out of its ruins. The proposition, therefore, which was brought forward by Lord Palmerston, received only a perfunctory support from Lord John, and was without difficulty abandoned by him.

Another suggestion made by Lord John was that Parliament should meet early in November, to which Lord Aberdeen was willing to agree, but the Cabinet generally was not. Petty but vexatious questions also arose as to patronage, as to which Lord Aberdeen almost always did what Lord John Russell desired ; without, however, at all succeeding in satisfying him.

For a short time, however, it appeared likely that a cordial good understanding would be restored between Lord Aberdeen and Lord John, and that they would act together in strict accord. Lord Palmerston intimated to Lord Aberdeen that he strongly objected to the measure of Parliamentary reform of which the principle had been accepted by the Cabinet. Lord Aberdeen and Lord John both considered that, this being so, Lord Palmerston ought not to continue a member of the Government; and after coming to a thorough understanding as to the course to be pursued towards Russia and Turkey, a letter, which was virtually one of dismissal, was prepared by Lord Aberdeen, in concert with Lord John, Lord Clarendon, and Sir James Graham, and sent to Lord Palmerston. He resigned, but was brought back to the Cabinet by a very singular agency. The Duke of Newcastle and another member of the Cabinet set themselves to work to induce him to recall his resignation ; both agreeing at that time in distrust of Lord John Russell, but in other respects actuated by different motives : for the Duke, like Lord Palmerston, desired that strong measures should be taken against Russia, which his colleague did not ; and the latter felt then some sympathy with Lord Palmerston as to Parliamentary reform, while the Duke was an ardent reformer. Lord Aberdeen and Lord John refused to allow any overtures to be made to Lord Palmerston, although they could not decline to consider an unconditional request from him to be allowed to withdraw his resignation. Such a request he was induced to make, moved, no doubt, by the news of the battle of Sinope, which had by this time been received. The fair prospect of the continuance of peace which had rejoiced Lord Aberdeen on December 10th had before the 22nd of that month wholly vanished. The Cabinet, as a whole, had become less indisposed to active

operations against Russia; Lord Palmerston was again in office; and Lord John was now less than ever disposed to listen to peaceful counsels, though for a short time he displayed more cordiality towards Lord Aberdeen, with whom in the matter of Lord Palmerston he had been in full accord. They repelled in concert, and with complete success, at the opening of the session, the absurd and offensive attacks made on Prince Albert; and Lord John received from Lord Aberdeen a steadier support on the Reform question than from any other colleague. Of this Lord John was very sensible; and when the Bill was finally withdrawn, he wrote to the Queen, that 'Lord Aberdeen alone had shown any regard for the honour of the Government.'

The intimate counsellors of Lord John were all eager for the postponement of the Reform Bill, a course to which he was himself strongly averse; and consequently, during the discussions on that subject, they did not exercise over him their accustomed influence. The result was seen in greater mutual confidence between him and Lord Aberdeen, whose 'personal kindness to' Lord John, as well as 'the sense of justice and honour which guided him on all occasions,' were warmly acknowledged.

To the postponement or withdrawal of the Reform Bill Lord Aberdeen was strongly opposed. On February 26th he wrote to Lord John:

> I have never been a great Parliamentary reformer, but having conscientiously adopted the principle of reform, and believing that the present measure is perfectly safe, and likely to be generally advantageous, I am clearly of opinion that we ought not to give way to a combination of persons, many of whom we believe to be prompted by very questionable motives. Should we postpone the Bill, it would be a virtual defeat, and we shall not be long in experiencing its effects.

The second reading of the Bill was, however, postponed; and when the date to which it had been put off approached,

there was again question of further delay, which was heartily desired by the greater part of the Cabinet and the majority of Lord John's own followers in the House of Commons. On this Lord Aberdeen wrote:

> Postponement of the Reform Bill means postponement during war. Now I should not much object to postponement, provided an honest desire existed to bring the war to the earliest possible termination, and to neglect no opportunity of restoring peace consistently with honour. The exigencies of the country might justify this, if coupled with a pledge to return zealously to the work of domestic reform as soon as we were relieved from foreign exertions. Instead of this, we have a plan sketched out of a thirty years' war, and even if we could dictate peace at Moscow, we have the certainty of our colleagues undertaking Parliamentary reform with indifference if not with reluctance. It was my opinion that we should have done better to move the second reading of the Bill on March 13th, as first proposed. Our position would have been more clear and our difficulties less, whatever might have been the result.

Ultimately the Bill was withdrawn, and withdrawn without being accompanied by Lord John's resignation, which had twice been tendered. That this was the case was, in the Queen's judgment, owing

> to that great spirit of fairness, justice, and unflinching singleness of purpose, and rare unselfishness, which so eminently distinguish our kind and valued friend, Lord Aberdeen.

The withdrawal of the Reform Bill brought Lord John great discomfort in the House of Commons, and renewed the influence of his *entourage*, which had for a moment been in abeyance. When, on the commencement of the war, the Secretaryship of State for War and Colonies was divided, Lord John recommended Sir George Grey for the latter post, but at the same time expressed his own desire to assume the management of a substantive department or to resign. As it had, from the formation of the Government, been Lord Aberdeen's desire that Lord John should hold office, he was, of course, well pleased that he should

do so, but was somewhat disturbed by Lord John's choice of a post—that of Lord President of the Council. Since the days of Henry VIII. that office had invariably been held by a peer; and not only would Lord John's appointment be contrary to all precedent, but it would involve various other shiftings of offices, naturally giving umbrage to those who held them. He endeavoured in vain to induce Lord John himself to take the Colonies, and he felt that there was a want of consideration shown, in making him the unwilling instrument of depriving friends of Lord John of posts to which they had been appointed at his instance.

> You must recollect (he wrote) that I am not in the situation of a minister who has formed his Government exclusively from his own friends, and who can therefore with less difficulty make to them such suggestions as he thinks best. It is only reasonable that people who fill offices at your own suggestion should feel that you are equally concerned in any change which may be proposed to them.

But though every wish of Lord John had been complied with, and many made discontented to satisfy what might almost be called a whim, Lord John again, in three weeks after his appointment as Lord President, tendered his resignation, on the ground that, as he had failed in conducting the Government business in the House of Commons, where the Government had sustained a series of petty but irritating defeats, while Lord Aberdeen had been eminently successful in the House of Lords, he ought to relieve him of his association.

Mention has been made in the preceding chapter, page 259, of the offence given by the judicial tone adopted by Lord Aberdeen in speaking of the war and its objects. While the irritation caused by that speech was at its height, some of Lord John's constituents in the City sent a requisition

to the Lord Mayor to convene a public meeting, to thank Lord John for his patriotic speeches and to censure Lord Aberdeen. Of this meeting Lord John seems to have expressed no disapproval, but sent to Lord Aberdeen a copy of the requisition, a step which reminded more than one person of the famous 'præscript' by which Canning sought to scare Addington from the Treasury. The highly successful speech made by Lord Aberdeen a few days later in the House of Lords rendered the attempt at censure a ridiculous failure, but from that time forward the efforts of a portion of Lord John's friends out of office to substitute him for Lord Aberdeen as head of the Government, and themselves for the Peelite members of the Administration, were all but unconcealed. Lord Aberdeen acquitted Lord John of personal participation in these intrigues 'to trip up his heels,' but he could not perceive that they were discouraged by Lord John in the manner which loyalty as a colleague required. Nor was he alone in this feeling. It was as warmly shared by the old Whig members of the Government as by any others. And Lord John was plainly told by Lord Clarendon, that if he should succeed in removing Lord Aberdeen from office, and be himself called on to fill his place, there was now not a single member of the existing Cabinet who would consent to take part in any Administration he might form.

As the year went on, Lord John became more and more impatient and restless. A rupture with Lord Aberdeen, in which the latter had the sympathy of the greater part of the Cabinet, though it might ensure the fall of the Government, was by no means certain or even likely to lead to Lord John's own accession to power, whilst, if the change was effected by Parliamentary vote, it would probably bring Lord Derby into office.

Shortly after his return to town in November, Lord John wrote to Lord Aberdeen, suggesting the removal of the Duke of Newcastle from the War Office and the substitution of Lord Palmerston. Lord Aberdeen by no means relished this proposal. He underrated Lord Palmerston's capacity for the office, and overrated that of the Duke of Newcastle. He, moreover, dreaded the results which might ensue if the direction of the war, the scope and objects of which Lord Palmerston desired to extend, were committed to his hands. But it may be doubted whether, as War Minister, he would have exercised more real influence on its course; whilst it cannot be doubted that he was the man in whose hands the public desired to see the office. Had he filled it, Lord John's final resignation, if ever offered, would not have produced the effects which actually resulted from it.

On the whole, Lord Aberdeen concluded that no such public advantage was likely to result from the change as to justify the removal of the Duke from a position in which, if he had shown no brilliant qualities and achieved no striking success, he could not be said to have failed. Lord John ended the correspondence by saying that he should bring the proposal before the Cabinet. This, however, he did not do, having in the interval before its meeting ascertained that he would receive no support from any of its members. But he intimated that, unless he were himself placed at the head of the Government, he intended to retire from the Cabinet on the close of the short session then commencing. When, however, on December 16th, the Cabinet met to prepare and discuss measures to be introduced into Parliament in the regular session of 1855, Lord John Russell took an active part in the discussion. Lord Aberdeen had been previously made aware, although not by himself, of the change which had

taken place in Lord John's intentions. After the meeting of the Cabinet, Lord John came to Lord Aberdeen and spoke of a matter of comparatively trivial importance, but did not seem disposed to advert to any other subject. Lord Aberdeen therefore took an opportunity of referring to the correspondence which had taken place, and the 'notice to quit' which had been given by Lord John. Without any embarrassment or apparent sense of inconsistency, he at once admitted that he had changed his intention.

Meanwhile, another ground of difference suggested itself, on which there was really a fair prospect that Lord John's old friends would side with him, and Lord Aberdeen and the Peelites be left in a minority. In the month of May, Mr. Gladstone had rather hastily dismissed the Right Honourable P. Kennedy from the post he held in the office of Woods and Forests. Technically, this dismissal was the act of 'the Treasury,' *i.e.* of the Prime Minister; practically, it was that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer alone.

Into the merits of this purely personal question, in which Lord John (who had at first acquiesced in his dismissal) ultimately took Mr. Kennedy's part so warmly as for some time to make a rupture upon it probable, it is unnecessary to enter. Lord Aberdeen did not deny Mr. Kennedy's honour and integrity, and might perhaps, had he been consulted, have seen his way to some other course than that actually taken; but he was not prepared to allow that Mr. Gladstone had acted without sufficient cause. Notice was given by a member of the House of Commons, before the close of the session of 1854, that he would in the following year move for a Committee of Inquiry into this subject; and there were differences of opinion, which did not appear

likely to be removed, as to the manner in which such a motion ought to be met. Finally, as correspondence seemed ineffectual, Lord Aberdeen suggested that it would be better to wait until Mr. Gladstone came to town, and that then, if they three could not agree upon a course to be pursued, the matter must go before the Cabinet. Lord John replied curtly that 'he must decline to submit to the decision of the Cabinet on questions regarding his personal honour.'

The projected conference was postponed in consequence of a sudden journey of Lord John to Paris, nor was the question ever brought before the Cabinet. As a cause of quarrel it might have had its attractions. It would have involved no Parliamentary vote of censure, affecting the whole Government, whilst it would have necessitated the retirement of Lord Aberdeen, Mr. Gladstone, the Duke of Newcastle, and Sir James Graham, whose places might have been filled by Whigs. But it was urged on Lord John by some of his friends, and that strongly, that his resignation on such a ground would be attended with ridicule, and that at a grave public crisis it would be felt that he did wrong in giving prominence to petty personal questions, in which no great interest or principle was involved.

There were some who thought that the permission which the Archbishop of Canterbury had obtained from Lord Aberdeen for a session of Convocation might lead to an irreconcilable difference; but the storm seemed for the moment, at all events, to have blown over; and Lord Clarendon wrote to Lord Aberdeen that he 'had not for years seen Lord John in such good spirits and good humour' as after his return from Paris on January 16th.

He was present at the Cabinets held January 16th, 18th, and 20th, and took an active part in the discussion

and preparation of the measures of the session. On the day before Parliament reassembled, he sent to Lord Aberdeen the outline of some measures of military reorganisation which he said he intended to propose at the next Cabinet; and after the House of Commons had met he gave notice of his intention to move at an early day the first reading of the Education Bill he had prepared. He had distinctly faced the probability, or rather the certainty, that a motion of censure would be proposed; for on Lord Aberdeen mentioning that it had reached his ears that it was likely to be moved by Sir Robert Peel, Lord John congratulated himself that it was not his father he would have to encounter. When, therefore, on the evening that Parliament again met, on January 23rd, Lord John resigned, because Mr. Roebuck had given notice of a vote of censure which he did not feel able to resist, Lord Aberdeen's sensation was one of surprise—a surprise to which, in the case of some of his colleagues, was for the moment added an indignant suspicion of deliberate treachery.

It cannot be denied that the resignation was effected at the worst possible time, and in the worst possible manner for Lord John's reputation. Had he resigned either on the failure of his proposal to displace the Duke of Newcastle, or at Christmas, according to his original announcement, his course might on public grounds have been censured, but would have been open to no shadow of personal reproach. But after the change of purpose avowed by him on December 16th; after taking part in the preparation of the measures for the session; after contemplating the certainty that a vote of censure would be proposed; his resignation, on notice of that vote being given, without his having even hinted to a single colleague that he contemplated such a step, assumed another character, and could not escape the

charge of inconsiderate levity without admitting one far graver.

I am myself convinced that, when Lord John left the House of Commons on the evening of the 23rd, he had no formed intention of resigning. He had received the disquieting intelligence that many of his old followers would vote against him, and doubtless felt this keenly. Disturbed in his mind he may have been; but that he was acting a part when he gave notice of the Education Bill, and when he suggested to the Government whip that Mr. C. Villiers should be induced to move an amendment to Mr. Roebuck's motion, I for one cannot believe. Yet this is what those would have us suppose, who affect to regard Lord John's resignation in such circumstances as a step which had been long intended, and which ought to have been foreseen.

The resignation did not, however, produce exactly the effect which Lord John or his friends had counted on. They had expected that Lord Aberdeen would at once resign, when deprived of the support of his most powerful colleague; or that at all events, if he did not do so, those old Whigs who had been accustomed to act with Lord John would retire from a Government of which he was no longer a member. If the Cabinet were thus broken up before any Parliamentary censure was inflicted on it, Lord John might, it was thought, be able to present himself as the head of a new, more vigorous, and purely Whig Administration. On the morning of the 25th Lord John was visited by Mr. Hayter, the Secretary to the Treasury. He found Mr. Vernon Smith and Colonel Romilly with Lord John. Mr. Hayter was eagerly interrogated by the trio, and great disappointment was expressed when they learned that no one but Lord John had resigned. As the day wore on, and it became evident to Lord John that no one

of the Cabinet intended to join him in deserting Lord Aberdeen, he began to feel that he had made a mistake, and that, though he had probably ensured the defeat of the Government, he might have seriously injured himself. Accordingly, on the evening of the 25th, he intimated to Lord Aberdeen, through a common friend, that he did not think it too late to reconsider his resignation, if securities were given him as to the future conduct of the war. Such security he was willing to find in the appointment of Lord Palmerston to the War Office; which had in fact been resolved on at an earlier date. The Duke of Newcastle, while not, of course, acquiescing in the justice of the popular discontent with his administration, was fully aware of its mischievous effect both on the Government and on the conduct of the war itself, and had determined to retire after the short session before Christmas. Unfortunately, he deferred doing so until after the commencement of the regular session, and, yet more unfortunately, he insisted that Lord Aberdeen should not communicate his intention to his colleagues. Lord Palmerston was disposed to encourage such a reconciliation as Lord John now proposed, but these overtures were at once and peremptorily rejected by Lord Aberdeen. Matters had in this instance gone too far for repentance, nor, come what might, was he prepared at that time to accept Lord John again as a colleague. His first impulse had been to retire from a contest in which Lord John's defection had rendered defeat all but certain, but this intention was overruled by the Queen and the Cabinet, every member of which desired publicly to testify his disapproval of Lord John's action. It was, therefore, determined to resist Mr. Roebuck's motion, and to meet it with a direct negative. The result depended on the Conservative vote. Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli, it is believed, hesitated for a moment, but

finally determined to vote for the appointment of the committee, and, with the Radicals and discontented Whigs, of course made up an overwhelming majority in the division, which took place on January 29th. The following day Lord Aberdeen resigned.

No expression of irritation escaped Lord Aberdeen during this crisis. On the night on which he announced his resignation in the House of Lords, Lord John's sister, Lady Abercorn, dined with the family at Argyll House. Her relations with Lord Aberdeen were those of a daughter, and she was full of distress at her brother's action. Lord Aberdeen devoted the whole evening to reassuring her, dwelling on all the noble traits of Lord John's character, and speaking of him in terms of ungrudging praise, while lamenting the weakness and eagerness which had made him in this instance the instrument of more selfish men. But while all along doing justice to Lord John's personal honour, and in the end believing that he had acted from impulse, Lord Aberdeen certainly at the time conceived his overthrow to have been deliberately planned. Carefully though he refrained from allowing any expression unfriendly to Lord John to escape his lips, he had written in that sense to his daughter-in-law in Egypt.

Lord Aberdeen thought that, in resigning as he did, Lord John made a great mistake in regard to his own personal interests. In writing to the Duke of Bedford in December 1856, he said:

> You say that Lord John thinks he committed an error in leaving my Government in the way he did. It is certain that a different course might more probably have led to the result at which we both wished to arrive.
>
> Had he supported us against Roebuck's motion, or enabled us in some mode to meet it with success, this might have been the case. Clarendon and I had already spoken about the possibility of Lord John going to Vienna to negotiate on the

'Four Points,' and if I had remained at the head of the Government I can have little doubt that peace would have been made. Had the peace been confirmed, I might then have irresistibly pressed my proposed retirement in his favour; or if the peace had been censured, the Government would at least have fallen in a cause of which I should have felt proud to the end of my days. Instead of this *euthanasia*, however, I was ignominiously overthrown in consequence of Lord John's decision.

Although I do not deny that I may have felt some reason to complain, this step was much more warmly resented by my friends than by myself, for in truth it made little or no change in my feelings towards Lord John. Knowing what he did, it seemed to me not unnatural that he might think me too slow and undecided in giving effect to my intentions; for I will not do him the injustice of supposing that he ever for a moment doubted my sincerity. It is possible, too, that, although I am convinced he entered into the Government from the most generous and high-minded motives, he may have found himself in a somewhat false position, and that he may have miscalculated his powers of enduring this position with equanimity for any length of time.

But, however this step may have been regarded by my friends at the moment, I trust that, seeing how little I have felt it myself, and looking to subsequent events, all asperity of feeling is now entirely at an end.

It gives me the greatest satisfaction to be informed by you of the good opinion and friendly feelings of Lord John. I can truly say that my conscience tells me that I have done my best to deserve them. I know that he has sometimes complained of my want of confidence in him; but for this there never was any real foundation. Any appearance of the kind was entirely the effect of accident, and never of intention. I may perhaps myself have thought Lord John over-sensitive, or sometimes rash or impracticable. But these are trifles. We parted with expressions of mutual regard, which on my side were perfectly sincere, as I have no doubt they were on his. These expressions I am happy in having this opportunity to renew; as well as, with my admiration of his great powers and noble impulses, to assure you that I shall always feel a warm interest in his reputation and honour.

I have written this chapter with reluctance, and not without pain. The characters of our great men are national possessions, and the exhibition of their weaknesses and failings, even when it is necessary, is to be deplored. Lord John Russell's character, as a whole

stands too high to be greatly injured by the temporary waywardness and impatience which under trying circumstances he displayed. But truth, if told at all, must be told plainly; and justice to Lord Aberdeen, whose exemplary patience was never more severely tried than during these two years, requires that it should be so. That Lord John should have found it difficult to sustain the position he himself of his own choice assumed is not surprising; that he should have been eager to direct the war, and think he could do so better than anyone else, is in keeping with his character; that, so thinking, he should have been impatient to realise what he thought for the public advantage, is pardonable. But Lord Aberdeen felt that his own desire to arrive at the end which Lord John sought should have been more fully trusted. He had spontaneously expressed his wish to see Lord John in his place, and his determination to effect the change when possible. He was sure that Lord John knew him to be sincere, and thought that not only Lord John's personal dignity, but his interests also, would have been better consulted by a generous confidence, than by a continual display of restless dissatisfaction. In the attitude which he assumed, Lord John could hardly expect to receive from Lord Aberdeen such cordial confidence as that reposed in Lord Clarendon and Sir James Graham. But it is eminently characteristic of Lord Aberdeen that, in spite of provocation, he steadily maintained that Lord John was the proper head of the Liberal party, and never ceased to desire that he should succeed him as Prime Minister.

CHAPTER XI

CLOSING YEARS: 1855–1860

Lord Aberdeen assists in the Formation of Lord Palmerston s Government—Letter to Sidney Herbert—Is made a Knight of the Garter—Letter from the Queen—Letter from Mr. Gladstone—Lord John and the Vienna Negotiations—Domestic Life—Visit from the Queen—Illness and Death—Mr. Gladstone's Estimate of Lord Aberdeen—General Sketch of Character.

On Lord Aberdeen's resignation, Lord Derby, whose adherents formed the bulk of the majority by which Mr. Roebuck's motion had been adopted, was sent for by the Queen. He failed to form an Administration, as did also Lord Lansdowne, who was next asked to undertake the task. Then at length Lord John Russell, of whose friends, next to those of Lord Derby, the majority was most largely composed, received that summons which for the past two years he had so anxiously desired. He accepted with alacrity Her Majesty's commission. Lord Palmerston expressed willingness to serve under him, as he already had, on certain conditions, to serve under Lord Derby or Lord Lansdowne. It may without want of charity be assumed that in so doing Lord Palmerston foresaw, that in neither case was the attempt to form a Government likely to succeed, and that his own succession would not be imperilled by his facility. But, with this exception, Lord John found, doubtless to his great surprise, that not one of his colleagues in the late Administration would join him. That the Peelite

members of the Government should refuse to do so may have been anticipated, and by Lord John's *entourage*, if not by Lord John himself, was not regretted; but the replies he received from other quarters were as unexpected by him as they were unwelcome. Lord Clarendon refused to give any answer 'till he had consulted the head of the Government of which he was lately a member.' The Duke of Argyll bluntly declined Lord John's invitation to call on him. Lord Lansdowne gravely regretted that it was impossible to assist him. Above all, that his old and tried friend Sir George Grey should refuse to serve under him, avowedly because he disapproved of his late conduct, must have been felt as a heavy blow. Lord Panmure and Mr. Vernon Smith were indeed ready and eager to join him, but Lord John no doubt knew that a Cabinet in which they filled the leading parts could hardly at such a time anticipate success. After forty-eight hours of humiliation, than which those who felt his recent action most keenly could hardly have desired for him a severer punishment, he resigned the attempt to construct a Government, nor did he ever again, except for a few months, more than ten years later, fill the post that he had coveted. It was on Lord Palmerston that the formation of a Government now devolved. The popular voice had from the first called for his selection, and after the failure of Lord Derby, Lord Lansdowne, and Lord John Russell, no other arrangement appeared practicable. Lord Aberdeen therefore exerted himself to ensure its success. Notwithstanding his strongly-expressed advice, however, his immediate friends resolved to decline Lord Palmerston's overtures. One of their number, Mr. Sidney Herbert, though he would not separate himself from those with whom he had always acted, acquiesced but reluctantly in this decision. He wrote to Lord Aberdeen the same evening,

to express his doubts whether the refusal was, on public grounds, justifiable, and begged that Lord Aberdeen would himself join the new Government, which would enable his friends to do so with security. Lord Aberdeen replied as follows:

ARGYLL HOUSE: *February* 6, 1855.

My dear Herbert,—I received your letter too late to answer it last night. In fact, I had gone to bed.

You say you are in a great difficulty as to the course you ought to take. I am in none whatever.

I gave you my decided opinion yesterday that you ought to continue in Palmerston's Administration; and I endeavoured to support this opinion by the very arguments which you repeat in your letter to me. Surely this letter ought to have been addressed to Gladstone and Graham, and not to me. I fully concur in thinking that you came to a wrong decision yesterday, and I would fain hope that it might still be reversed. When you sent to me yesterday to attend your meeting, I certainly hoped it was with the intention of following my advice.

Your reluctance to continue in Palmerston's Cabinet is mainly founded on the apprehension that he would pursue a warlike policy beyond reasonable bounds. I have already told you that I have had some explanation with him on the terms of peace, with which I am satisfied. But whatever may be his inclinations, you ought to rely on the weight of your own character and opinions in the Cabinet. I am persuaded that the sentiments of the great majority of the members of the Cabinet are similar to your own, and that you may fairly expect reason and sound policy to prevail in the question of peace and war. But, above all, I have recently had some very full conversations with Clarendon on this subject, and I am entirely satisfied with his disposition and intentions. I am sanguine in the belief that he will give effect to his present views.

A perseverance in the refusal to join Palmerston will produce very serious effects, and will never be attributed to its true cause. The public feeling will be strongly pronounced against you, and you will greatly suffer in reputation if you persevere, at such a moment as this, in refusing to continue in the Cabinet. In addition to the public necessity, I think you owe much to our late Whig colleagues, who behaved so nobly and generously towards us after Lord John's resignation. They have some right to expect this sacrifice.

Although your arguments do not apply to me, for I yesterday adopted them all, you conclude your letter by pressing me

to enter the Cabinet. Now there is really no sense in this; and I cannot imagine how you could seriously propose it. You would expose me to gratuitous indignity, to which no one ought to expect me to submit. I say gratuitous; for I could not be of the slightest use in such a situation for the purpose you require. I can retire with perfect equanimity from the Government in consequence of the vote of the House of Commons; but to be stigmatised as the head, and tolerated as a subordinate member, I cannot endure. If at any future time my presence should ever be required in a Cabinet, I should feel no objection to accept any office, or to enter it without an office. But to be the head of a Cabinet to-day, and become a subordinate member of the very same Cabinet to-morrow, would be a degradation to which I could never submit. I tell you plainly that I would rather die than do so; and, indeed, the sense of it would go far to kill me.

If you tell me that your retaining your present offices, without the slightest sacrifice, but, on the contrary, with the approbation of all, is in any degree to depend on my taking such a course, I can only say that, as friends, I cannot believe it possible that you should be guilty of such mere wanton cruelty without any rational object.

I must then earnestly exhort you to reconsider the decision of yesterday, and to continue to form part of the Government. I will do anything in my power to facilitate this. If you like, I will go to Palmerston, and promote any explanation between him and Gladstone on the subject of peace and war. Or I will tell him that you have yielded to my strong recommendation. In short, I am ready to do anything in my power.

I wish you to show this letter to Gladstone and to Graham, to whom, as you will see, it is addressed as much as to yourself.

Thanks to his disinterested efforts, which were most warmly and handsomely acknowledged by Lord Palmerston, the reluctance of Lord Aberdeen's friends to serve under Lord Palmerston was overcome, and the new Administration formed.

At the time of the opening of the short session of Parliament in December, the Queen had, in the most gracious manner, and as a mark of her especial favour and support, conferred on Lord Aberdeen the vacant ribbon of the Garter. By a strange coincidence his installation as a

knight was fixed for the day on which Lord Palmerston's writ was moved for in the House of Commons, on his acceptance of the office of First Lord of the Treasury. In writing to Lady Haddo from Windsor that evening, Lord Aberdeen, after mentioning that the Queen had expressed to him her thankfulness for what he had done in promoting the formation of the new Cabinet, said :

A little thing showed me her feelings to-day. I am come down here to be invested as a Knight of the Garter, and at a part of the ceremony it is necessary to kiss the Queen's hand. This, I need not say, is held out in a lifeless manner for the purpose. To my surprise, when I took hold of it to lift it to my lips, she squeezed my hand with a strong and significant pressure. The Queen has also desired that I should keep the Green Ribbon, for which she finds there have been two precedents in the last hundred and fifty years. These are empty honours, but they are proofs of real regard.

Nor was it only in dumb show that Her Majesty's feelings were expressed. On Lord Aberdeen's arrival at the Castle he had found this letter awaiting him.

WINDSOR CASTLE : *February* 7, 1855.

Though the Queen hopes to see Lord Aberdeen in a short while, she seizes the opportunity of approving the appointment of the Hon. and Revd. Arthur Douglas to the living of St. Olave's, Southwark, to say what she hardly trusts herself to do verbally, without giving way to her feelings. She wishes to say what a *pang* it is for her to separate from *so* kind, and dear, and valued a friend as Lord Aberdeen has ever been to her since she has known him. The day he became her Prime Minister was a *very happy* one for her ; and throughout his ministry he has ever been the kindest and wisest adviser, one to whom she could apply for advice on all and trifling occasions even. This she is sure he will still ever be—but the losing him as her first adviser in her Government is *very painful.* The pain has been to a certain extent lessened by the knowledge of *all* he has done to further the formation of this Government in so loyal, noble, and disinterested a manner, and by *his* friends retaining their posts, which is a *great* security against any possible dangers.

The Queen is sure that the Prince and herself may ever rely on his valuable support and advice in all times of difficulty, and she now concludes with the expression of her warmest

thanks for all his kindness and devotion, as well as of her inalterable friendship and esteem for him, and with every wish for his health and happiness.

The letters of farewell which he received from nearly all his late colleagues were equally gratifying; but their feelings towards Lord Aberdeen were perhaps best expressed by that of Mr. Gladstone, from which I am permitted to make the following extract.

February 10, 1855.—Warned without ceasing, during the late proceedings, not to allow the remembrance of persons to weigh with me, I was but too well schooled into forgetting them; and it was not until I turned my back to quit your room, next door, on Tuesday, that I recollected it was for the last time, and became keenly sensible that a chapter of my life, in which arduous duty and pleasure had been the most closely blended, was brought at once and very painfully to an end. Since then I have wished to write to you, but have shrunk from the task. I feel as if a dear friend were dead; and I abhor the manner in which the end has been accomplished. Even the unbounded kindness of your letter cannot overpower the revulsion with which I look back on the past fortnight, and I have used the poor and feeble expedient of trying to shut my eyes upon the fact I loathed.

I am thankful, however, that you have roused me. When I try to measure our respective shares of the last disaster, I am glad to believe they are not so unequal as they seem. We, who remain in the Government, set out anew, clothed in tinsel of which we shall soon be stripped. My loss, indeed, already suffered, is peculiar, and scarcely to be told. But while we lose, you will gain from day to day. When, to use the beautiful expression of the Psalms, 'this tyranny shall be overpast,' and the popular mind, recovering its balance, shall have returned to justice, then many a longing eye, of those now averse, will follow you wherever you may be. I dearly prize your fame and honour; so much of it as I can promote or injure is to me a sacred trust; and with this thought full before me, I am unable to regret the day when I entreated you not to turn away from the seat of power, to which you had the paramount claim conferred by superior wisdom and virtue.

You have now been Minister of England; you are one of a lofty line; but I reflect with joy and comfort on the comparison your name will bear with those who have preceded and with those who may follow you. I do not agree in your estimate of your services. I forbear to cite the Queen against you, because you may ascribe her admirable letter to the emotions

of so womanly a heart; but I believe the country is even now far more just towards you than you are yourself. And I have some further satisfaction in the thought, that those who have long acted with you were called by a sense of public duty to gather themselves round you at the last, and to add, whatever their faithful and declared adherence could add, to the dignity and lustre of your conduct.

You make far too much of any service I have rendered to your Government. I wish it were in my power to do justice, in return, to the benefits I have received from you. Your whole demeanour has been a living lesson to me; and I have never gone, with my vulnerable temper and impetuous moods, into your presence, without feeling the strong influence of your calm and settled spirit.

For a short time Lord Aberdeen remained nearly as much occupied with public affairs as when Prime Minister. Lord Clarendon wrote to him almost every day, and the discussions of the Cabinet were freely confided to him, as well as the letters and despatches received from the Continent. But before many days, the Peelite members of the Government, who had with difficulty been persuaded to remain in it, resigned. Lord Palmerston, as might from the first have been easily foreseen, found himself unable to procure from the House of Commons a reversal of the vote appointing the Committee of Inquiry; and Sir James Graham, Mr. Gladstone, and Sidney Herbert found themselves unable to agree with Lord Palmerston in accepting a situation which was in fact inevitable. Lord Aberdeen thought them wrong, and told them so; but he was not inclined to make their remaining in Lord Palmerston's Government a matter of personal entreaty on his part for a second time; and though he disagreed from them, and approved of the Duke of Argyll remaining in the Cabinet, and of Lord Canning joining it, and would have wished Mr. Cardwell to do the same, he did not censure his other friends for forming an opinion different to his own. The removal of most of his more immediate friends from the Cabinet of

course made some difference in the intimacy of his relations with its remaining members; but his intercourse with Lord Clarendon continued to be close and confidential, until after the rupture of the negotiations for peace which were carried on by Lord John Russell at Vienna.

As is now known, peace might have been then made. Terms were suggested by Austria, of which Prince Gortchakoff was prepared to recommend the acceptance to his Government, and which M. Drouyn de l'Huys and Lord John Russell thought should be accepted. But peace on such terms would have been unpalatable in England, and they were rejected by the Government.

Lord John had, on the retirement of the Peelites, been offered and had accepted the Colonial Secretaryship. On his return from Vienna he found himself in a position which, in some respects, was even more irksome to him than that which he had occupied in Lord Aberdeen's Government. In that Cabinet he had been leader of the House of Commons, and possessed an influence which, if less waywardly exercised, would have been all but unbounded. In Lord Palmerston's Government he had ceased to lead in Parliament, he had little influence, his recommendation of the Vienna terms had been set aside almost contemptuously, and he had in fact become little more than a mere departmental minister. The only advantage he had gained was a respite from the importunities of his own friends, who were now provided with offices. He was consequently as dissatisfied with Lord Palmerston's Government as he had been with that of Lord Aberdeen, and, untaught by experience, was inclined to play in it the same part which he had taken in that by which it had been preceded. About a month after his return from Vienna he, with apparent *insouciance*, paid a visit to Lord Aberdeen, whom he had

not seen since his resignation in January, and poured out to him (as Lord Aberdeen wrote), 'with some bitterness,' his complaints against Lord Palmerston and Lord Clarendon, who had, he said, rejected terms of peace which he himself thought acceptable. With many professions of friendship, he sought to enlist Lord Aberdeen's aid in placing himself in a position to give effect to the peaceful policy of which he declared himself the friend, though not as yet openly the advocate. Lord Aberdeen's strong sense of humour was too much touched by the absurdity of the situation to fee resentment, which many men in such a position would have testified, at being so approached by the main instrument of his own overthrow, and he was too desirous to see peace restored to allow any personal feeling to stand in its way. He received Lord John's advances good-humouredly, and told him he should look to him as 'the man of peace' *in the Cabinet*, but gave no encouragement to ideas of reforming its composition. Lord Aberdeen sent an account of this interview to Sir James Graham, whose comment on it was:

> Lord John is indeed unfathomable. I know not which most to admire: his pacific language, or his attempt to maintain friendly relations with you. He might have made peace at Vienna; he was bound in honour to defend your Government, of which he remained a member till the eve of an attack, when he ran away leaving the door open for a triumphant entry of the enemy into the fortress. To talk of peace *now*, and to profess friendship and concert, is absurd; but his present position is punishment as severe as an implacable adversary could desire.

Lord John repeated the visit a few days later, and was equally bitter against his colleagues; but it was only in consequence of a direct question in the House of Commons from Sir John Walsh that he publicly avowed his approval of the Austrian proposals. Lord Aberdeen wrote to Mr. Gladstone the next day:

I think you will read Lord John's speech with some surprise. Although fully aware of his opinions myself, I never expected that he would have the courage to communicate them to the House of Commons, and to the whole world, as he did yesterday. He has done many wonderful things; but I think the most wonderful of all is the course which he proposes to pursue, retaining the opinions he has expressed on the subject of peace and the Austrian proposal. I presume, however, that this is scarcely possible, and that the matter cannot remain as it is at present. I felt this so strongly, that I had some thoughts of going to him to-day, and of telling him that he ought not to remain another hour a member of the Government. I should have done this in return for the very frank and open manner in which he had volunteered recently to communicate to me his own views and opinions on the transactions at Vienna. But after all, I am not his 'keeper;' and I do not know that there is anything in our antecedents which could call for such an act of friendship on my part. He must act for himself; but to this conclusion I think he must inevitably come at last.

Had Lord John continued, as he intended, a member of the Government, Sir E. L. Bulwer's motion of censure would unquestionably have been carried; but on the eve of its being brought forward he found it impossible to resist the plainly expressed opinion of the public that he should resign.

The resignation of the Peelites had again formed them into a party, though a small one, and of this party Lord Aberdeen was the recognised head. But to its continued existence he was strongly opposed. He urged that it had in fact become merged in the body of the Liberal party, and that the sooner this was recognised the better. After the General Election of 1857, at which the greater part of the so-called Peelites lost their seats, this recognition appeared to him more than ever desirable. He wrote to Mr. Gladstone that:

We must accustom ourselves to the conviction that there is no such thing as a distinctive Peelite party in existence. . . . After Lord Derby's overthrow by a junction with the Liberal party, and the formation of a Government which recognised Parliamentary Reform as one of its fundamental measures, the

whole relation of parties was changed, and I consider the amalgamation of Peel's friends with the Liberal party to have practically taken place.

Lord John's personal ambition and the discontent of the House of Commons at the conduct of the war, led to the overthrow of my Government, and to the exclusion of myself and the Duke of Newcastle, as well as of Lord John himself. But the Government remained for the most part composed of the same individuals; and although circumstances induced some of Peel's friends (whether wisely or not) to leave it, I do not see that they were thereby thrown any nearer to Lord Derby and his party, or necessarily released from the Liberal policy to which they had recently adhered. They had simply regained their independence. . . . For my own part, I am little more than a spectator; but I adhere to the declarations made on my assuming the Government. . . . I believe, too, that in this age of progress the Liberal party must ultimately govern the country; and I only hope that their supremacy may be established without mischief or confusion.

The proposition that the Peelites had virtually joined the Liberal party was stoutly contested by Mr. Gladstone, who maintained that, if it were true, he had been guilty of deceiving the world and his own constituency, and had indeed deceived himself. But Lord Aberdeen adhered to his position:

I think you will admit, on reflection (he wrote), that I am right in saying that, when my Government was formed, an amalgamation of Peel's friends with the Liberal party took place. This is so true that, although frequently tormented by the personal waywardness of Lord John, the amalgamation was complete so long as the Government lasted.

You joined Palmerston's Government with reluctance; but you left it with Graham and Herbert on a ground entirely unconnected with Peelism, and on which any other three members of the Cabinet might with equal consistency have seceded. You remained on the Liberal side of the House, and did not declare any general hostility to the Government.

Now has anything happened essentially to alter your position? It is true that the House and the public determine to call you Peelites; and certainly I am the last man in the world to reject on your account the honour and advantage of being friends of Sir Robert Peel; but your differences with the Government have no necessary connection with him or with his memory. You have opposed the Government, and may

probably do so again, in the exercise of the freedom you have acquired ; but it is as a Liberal ; and I think something much more important must take place to justify crossing the House and entering the opposite camp.

This may happen, and it is even probable that it may do so. I think it seems clear that the Government will bring forward a great measure of Reform. Then you will be found to differ from Graham and Herbert, and here would be a case to authorise a permanent change of position in the House.

My strong recommendation is to await some such cause of change. You will probably act together in many questions connected with foreign policy, economy, and retrenchment. If any great difference should occur, let it be declared in the face of the House, and let it lead to its natural result. I am sure this would be more honourable to yourself and more satisfactory to all concerned.

It is probably not too much to say, that it was Lord Aberdeen's influence which restrained Mr. Gladstone on more than one occasion from following the bent of his inclination, and throwing himself into the ranks of the Conservative party. A few months before the General Election of 1857, an interview between Lord Derby and Mr. Gladstone, for the purpose of establishing a concert of action on the meeting of Parliament which could only have led to one result, had been all but arranged. On that occasion Lord Aberdeen had written :

December 5, 1856.—I have told Graham that I thought he was too hasty in imagining that you had actually made up your mind, and that you would be found, at the opening of the Session, seated on the front bench of the Opposition. I added, however, that I thought it probable this step would not be long delayed ; although it was clear that much prudence and circumspection would be required on your part before you arrived at such a decision.

As you agreed to join Palmerston after I had left the Government, I think it will never do to attempt his overthrow without some specific and assignable cause. Strong apprehensions of a mischievous policy, and general disapprobation and distrust, will not be sufficient.

. . . . . .

There is nothing to prevent Lord Derby from approaching you if he is desirous of doing so ; but any intimation from you of your readiness to communicate with him would be in reality

to take the initiative, and if it had any result would lead to the establishment of such a compact as, I think at this moment, would scarcely be justifiable. My advice, therefore, would be to remain perfectly passive for the present.

I confess that I have little skill in political combinations, and do not know what the exigencies of party may require or may render necessary; but I hope you feel that my sole object is to protect your reputation, and to promote your future efficiency.

Your position in the House of Commons is very peculiar. With an admitted superiority of character, and of intellectual power, above any other member, I fear that you do not really possess the sympathy of the House at large, while you have incurred the strong dislike of a considerable portion of Lord Derby's followers. Your recent conduct in Parliament has not been fully understood, but it has been very unpopular, and any new course which is not perfectly intelligible and clearly justified by the necessity of the case will only add to this unpopularity. I care little for the Government, and entertain the greatest apprehension of Palmerston's foreign policy. I have the highest admiration of Lord Derby's talents; but I see very much to lament in him, and still more in his friends. You are the person to whose future I look forward with hope and confidence; and with so much to command ultimate success, it cannot very long be delayed. I am only anxious that these prospects should not be injured by any premature or ill-considered decision.

The contemplated meeting did not take place.

Notwithstanding all that happened during the two years for which they were colleagues, and in spite of the catastrophe with which their association closed, Lord Aberdeen continued to think Lord John Russell the fittest head of the Liberal party; and, except perhaps for the first few weeks after Lord John had 'tripped up his heels,' during which he considered that Lord John's conduct deserved some retribution, he remained steadily disposed to assist him in obtaining the Premiership. Lord John's errors were, he thought, sufficiently atoned for by the humiliation he had undergone in 1855, and the isolated and powerless position to which he had been reduced; while to the higher and nobler qualities of his character Lord Aberdeen never

failed to do the fullest justice. When, towards the close of 1856, the Duke of Bedford made inquiries of Lord Aberdeen as to the exact nature of the communications which had passed between him and Lord John as to the succession of the latter to the first place in the Government, he replied in the letter which has been quoted in a previous chapter. It cost Lord Aberdeen no effort to write this letter, which was the simple expression of his thoughts. But it would be difficult to find among his contemporaries in public life another equally free from harbouring even a trace of resentment for grave injury sustained. Lord Aberdeen sent a copy of the Duke's letter, and of his own reply, to Sir James Graham, who, in returning them, wrote thus :

December 28, 1856.—I must begin by the expression of my feelings on reading your answer to the Duke of Bedford. I observe that it is dated on Christmas Day. It is well worthy of a Christian. If I could envy you anything, it would be the frame of mind which prompted that answer. I know few men who could have written it. To return good for evil ; to love our enemies ; to bless even those who despitefully use us ; are the hard proofs of an honest endeavour 'to be perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect.' Yet this is the spirit which dictated your answer. It might have been more cold and more guarded ; but I would rather have written it than anything which I have read for many a day. I doubt not it will have its reward. The facts I believe are stated by you with perfect accuracy. The intentions, the reflections, the feelings, are your own. No one can gainsay them ; all good men must admire them.

Lord Aberdeen continued, so long as he took any part at all in public affairs, to regard Lord John's accession to power as desirable, and acted in concert with him in regard to the India Bills of 1858. But Lord Aberdeen had now ceased to occupy himself actively in political contests. His position had become that of a referee and confidant, whose advice was sought and listened to, who

still took a lively interest in public affairs of real importance, but who was no longer concerned in party or personal conflicts. His influence, however, was perhaps greater now than at any time. It was known that, if the Derby Government were driven from office in 1858, it was Lord Aberdeen who would be sent for by the Queen. As it was equally well known that, though he might consent to form a Cabinet, he would never again consent to head one (which, indeed, his declining strength forbade), it was felt that the decision between the rival claims to supremacy which agitated the Liberal party would probably devolve on him. The Government of Lord Derby, however, continued to struggle on through another year of existence.

But honourable and influential as was the position he occupied in the world, it was on his home that his thoughts and affections were daily more and more centred. Except for a few days in 1854, he had been absent from Haddo for three years, when he returned there in the summer of 1855. His enjoyment of his stay there in that and the following years was profound. All his old habits were revived and old pursuits resumed, and the days were passed much in the manner which I have before described. But the formality was less formal, the stiffness less rigid. There was greater softness in his manner. Less restraint was imposed on the manifestation of his affections, and the benevolence of his spirit was less disguised by external severity.

Many years before, on Christmas Day, 1844, Lord Aberdeen, then staying at Windsor Castle, came over for a few hours in the afternoon to St. Leonard's Vale, a house then occupied by Lord and Lady Haddo. All his children, the writer among them, were assembled there. As he rose to go, on his return to the Castle, he reminded us that we

had all been there on the previous Christmas Day. He had not then expected, he said, that we should all meet again on that day, but, as we had done so, he would preach to us a sermon—a very short one, which would be text and sermon both—but one which he hoped we should all remember as long as we lived : 'Love one another.' He then left the room. It was the spirit of this sermon which breathed in all his later life at Haddo—a spirit by which he had been always ruled, but the influence of which was more perceptible as the work of the outer world exercised a less peremptory claim on his time and thoughts.

Almost the only reflection which troubled the tranquil enjoyment of this period of repose was the apprehension that he had not struggled with sufficient earnestness in the cause of peace in 1853. To Hudson Gurney he wrote in 1857 :

> You are quite right in supposing that I look back with satisfaction to the efforts made by me to preserve peace. My only cause of regret is that when I found this to be impossible I did not at once retire, instead of allowing myself to be dragged into a war which, although strictly justifiable in itself, was most unwise and unnecessary. All this will be acknowledged some day, but the worst of it is that it will require fifty years before men's eyes are opened to the truth.

One fact may be mentioned, which shows how deeply his share of responsibility for the Russian war weighed upon Lord Aberdeen's heart and conscience. Many new churches, manses, and schools had been built by Lord Aberdeen. The manse of Methlick was about this time rebuilt on a new site and in a better manner, but Lord Aberdeen declined to rebuild the parish church, though the structure was dilapidated, ugly, and inconvenient. 'I leave that for George,' he said. His reasons for this, in him, very unusual conduct were never suspected, even by those most nearly in his confidence, until after his death ; when

the following text was found written by him more than once, and at different times, on various scraps of paper:

And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the Lord my God: but the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight (1 Chronicles xxii. 7, 8).

During the winter of 1855 Lord Aberdeen had written the following note upon the war, which then still pursued its course.

I have never entertained the least doubt of the justice of the war in which we are at present engaged. It is unquestionably just, and it is also strongly marked by a character of disinterestedness. But although just and disinterested, the policy and the necessity of this war may perhaps be less certain. It is possible that our posterity may form a different estimate on this head from that at which we have arrived.

The policy, or necessity, of any war must always be, more or less, the subject of doubt, and must vary according to a change of circumstances. This is not matter of immutable principle, but may be affected by an infinite variety of considerations. It is true that every necessary war must also really be a just war; but it does not absolutely follow that every just war must also be a necessary war.

Be this as it may, it is perfectly clear that a vast majority of the people of this country entertain no doubt on the subject, but are thoroughly convinced that the war is both just and necessary, and, as such, are prepared to give it their cordial support.

Now, with the existence of so strong and general a feeling, it seems almost to partake of arrogance to demur in any degree to these conclusions, and to resist the weight of the popular voice.

But a reference to history may prevent us from subscribing implicitly to such demonstrations of opinion. It is enough to recall to recollection that, when Sir Robert Walpole was reluctantly drawn into his Spanish war, the country was quite as unanimous as—perhaps more so than—at the present moment. Yet, in spite of such unanimity, there is no man who would now hesitate to declare that the war in question was both unjust and unnecessary.

The national feeling at that period was excited under circumstances in some degree similar to the present. At that period a peace of thirty years had rendered the minds of men more

easy to be roused by appeals which had all the character of novelty; and at the present day I believe that our forty years' peace has rendered the nation more ready to receive the excitement and to encounter the unknown evils of a state of war. I am very far from meaning to assert that the people did not entertain a strong feeling of indignation against injustice and of sympathy for the oppressed. Their natural feelings are always generous; but I doubt if this impulse would have led to the same results if it had been called into action at an earlier period after the conclusion of the late war. Indeed, I have had personal experience of the truth of this opinion; for in the war which Russia declared against Turkey in the year 1828, although equally unjust and unprovoked, the people of this country saw the Russian troops advance almost to the gates of Constantinople with comparative indifference; and the Government of the Duke of Wellington, who wished to uphold the interests of the Porte, met with no response from Parliament or the people, but were thought to espouse the cause of tyranny, ignorance, and barbarism.

We hear great apprehensions expressed on all sides lest this war should be terminated by an ignominious peace. But although we should share in the feeling, it may not be so easy to avoid the imputation of such a result. For in every contest in which this country has been engaged during the last century we may presume that it has been the determination of each succeeding Government, loudly declared, to obtain the conditions of a just and honourable peace. It is remarkable, however, that, with a single exception, every treaty concluded at the termination of our great wars has been stigmatised as humiliating and degrading, ignominious, hollow, and unsafe.

Such has been the sentence of the patriots of the day. It was the case at the peace of Utrecht in 1713, at the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, at the peace of Paris in 1763, at the peace of Versailles in 1783, and at the peace of Amiens in 1801. The single exception was the peace of Paris in 1814; and, although severely criticised in other respects, it would have been difficult in this case for patriotism or faction to have discovered humiliation and disgrace in a treaty dictated at the head of a victorious army in the capital of an enemy.

But although such has been the contemporaneous condemnation of our treaties of peace, I do not think that this severe verdict has been ratified by a more impartial posterity.

The restoration of peace, it is needless to say, caused him the liveliest pleasure; but he saw little to commend in the manner in which the foreign relations of the country were subsequently conducted Like other men, he was

profoundly moved by the disasters which marked the commencement of the Indian Mutiny; but, unlike too many other men in England, he never for an instant hesitated to denounce the 'bloodthirsty spirit' which took possession of the press and of the people, and which he partly attributed to the disappointment felt at the conclusion of the war with Russia without any signal or specially glorious triumph. He wrote more than once to Lord Canning, to encourage him under the obloquy heaped on him for his strict regard to justice.

During the annual stay of the Royal Family at Balmoral, Lord Aberdeen's relations with the Queen and Prince Consort were always pleasantly renewed, and in the autumn of 1857 they paid him a visit at Haddo House. For more than a mile along the approach, the road was lined with tenants on horseback, who closed in after Her Majesty's carriage, and escorted her to the house in a manner similar to that in which they had accompanied Lord and Lady Haddo home after their marriage.

The visit was a purely private one, only Lord Aberdeen's children and grandchildren, with Lord and Lady Abercorn and two of their daughters, being present; but an address was presented to the Queen by the tenantry, thanking her for the honour which she had done their landlord.[1]

Not long after the Queen's visit, Lord Aberdeen was attacked by sudden illness, which for two or three days threatened danger to life. Any cause for immediate apprehension soon passed away; but he did not recover strength,

[1] It may amuse some readers to know (as an example of the simplicity of life mentioned at page 193) that the window-curtains, bed-curtains, and other furniture of Her Majesty's room on this occasion, consisted of white dimity lined with blue calico.

and in compliance with medical advice returned to London early in December. There his health gradually, though very slowly, improved, and in the summer of 1858, though not as strong as before, he resumed most of his former habits, attending the House of Lords and even speaking there. As an adviser, he took an important share in the political movements of the year. The autumn was passed pleasantly at Haddo, and cheered by visits from M. Guizot, Sir James Graham, Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, the Bishop of Oxford, and other friends.

The improvement in Lord Aberdeen's health continued through all the early part of 1859, and in the summer he appeared to be restored to very nearly the same condition as before his attack in 1857; but almost immediately after returning to Haddo in August an apparently trivial indisposition, which confined him to his room for a day or two, was followed by a gradual decay of strength from which he never rallied. He returned indeed to London for the winter, and was well enough to go back as usual to Haddo in the summer of 1860; but slowly, and almost imperceptibly, his strength continued to decline. He could no longer walk more than a few steps unassisted. He could no longer drive himself in his pony carriage; and when, at the end of October 1860, he returned to London, it was evident that his life was drawing towards a close. On December 14 he tranquilly expired, surrounded by his children and step-children. Not all of them, however, were there. His eldest son and his dearly beloved daughter-in-law were in Egypt, where Lord Haddo, then suffering from the mortal illness under which he sank less than four years after, had gone for the sake of the climate. On December 21 he was laid by the side of those he had best loved, in the ruins of the old church at Stanmore. The funeral service was read

by Bishop Wilberforce, who in a letter to the writer thus described the scene :

> I am most thankful I was with you at Stanmore, not only because I should ever after have so lamented my absence, but also because I would not for anything have missed that last and most impressive sight, which now is engraven in my memory for ever : Graham's tall kingly figure, with the snow falling on his bald head and his full countenance ; Gladstone, with his face *speaking* ; Newcastle ; you ; and the light *within* that vault, and all that belonged to its opening and its closing.

'ΔΙΚΑΙΟΤΑΤΟΣ' is the epitaph inscribed on Lord Aberdeen's monument in Westminster Abbey. The love of justice was, no doubt, strong in him, but, like nearly all attempts to describe a complex human character in a single word, the title of 'most just' conveys but a partial idea of what manner of man Lord Aberdeen in truth was. Many have equalled him, perhaps have surpassed him, in devotion to exact justice, who have altogether failed to gain that deep respect and confidence which were invariably given to Lord Aberdeen by those who were brought into close association with him. Nor is the cause of this far to seek, for the existence of a keen sense of justice is quite compatible with the absence of other qualities which Lord Aberdeen also possessed in no common measure ; and the possession of which, even had that particular virtue been less strongly developed in him, would have sufficiently accounted for the influence over others which he obtained. The impression produced on those who acted with him in public life, by the unselfishness, toleration, unsuspiciousness, and calmness of mind, which were as marked characteristics of Lord Aberdeen as was his love of justice, has been described by one of the most eminent among them, in a letter written a few months after Lord Aberdeen's death, from which I am permitted to quote the following extracts :

'Some of his [Lord Aberdeen's] great qualities,' wrote Mr. Gladstone, 'adorned him in common with several, or even with many, contemporary statesmen; such as clearness of view, strength of the deliberative faculty, strong sense of duty to the Crown, and the most thorough and uncompromising loyalty to his friends and colleagues. . . . But if I have said that he had much in common with other distinguished men, it has been by way of preface to what I have now to say, namely, that what has ever struck me most in his character as a whole was its distinctiveness. There were several mental virtues that he possessed in a degree very peculiar; there were, I think, one or two in which he stood almost alone. . . . I will name the following characteristics, one and all of which were more prominent in him than in any public man I ever knew: mental calmness; the absence (if for want of better words I may describe it by a negative) of all egotism; the love of exact justice; a thorough tolerance of spirit; and last, and most of all, an entire absence of suspicion. There was something very remarkable in the combination of these qualities as well as in their separate possession. Most men who might be happy enough to have one-half of his love of justice would be so tossed with storms of indignation at injustice as to lose the balance of their judgment. But he had, or seemed to have, all the benefit, all the ennobling force of strong emotion, with a complete exemption from its dangers. His mind seemed to move in an atmosphere of chartered tranquillity, which allowed him the view of every object, however blinding to others, in its true position and proportion. . . . I feel that I cannot by any effort do justice to what I have termed his finely shaded character; . . . but I cannot stop without saying a word on the quality which I regard as beyond all others his own; I mean the absence from his nature of all tendency to suspicion. Those who have read his State papers, and admired their penetrating force and comprehensive scope, will not misunderstand me when I say that he was in this respect a little child, not from defect of vision but from thorough nobleness of nature. This entire immunity from suspicion, which makes our minds in general like a haunted place, and the sense of the immunity that he conveyed to his friends in all his dealings with them, combined with the deep serenity of his mind, which ever seemed to beguile and allay by some kindly process of nature excitement in others, gave an indescribable charm to all intercourse with him in critical and difficult circumstances. Hence perhaps in great part, and not merely from his intellectual gifts, was derived the remarkable power he seemed to me to exercise in winning confidences without seeking to win them; and, on the whole, I believe that this quality, could we hold it as it was held in him, would save us from ten erroneous

judgments for one into which it might lead. For the grand characteristic of suspicion after all, as of superstition, is to see things as they are not. . . . Lord Aberdeen was not demonstrative. He was unstudied in speech, and it is of interest to inquire what it was that gave such extraordinary force and impressiveness to his language. He did not deal in antithesis. His sayings were not sharpened with gall. In short, one might go on disclaiming for him all the accessories to which most men who are impressive owe their impressiveness. Yet I never knew anyone who was so impressive, in brief utterances conveying the sum of the matter. . . . It is no reproach to other statesmen of this or of other periods to say that scarcely any of them have had a celebrity so entirely unaided by a transitory glare. But if this be so, it implies that while they for the most part must relatively lose, he must relatively and greatly gain. If they have had stage-lights, and he has had none, it is the hour when those lights are extinguished that will for the first time do that justice between them which he was too noble, too far aloft in the tone of his mind, to desire to anticipate. All the qualities and parts in which he was great were those that are the very foundation-stones of our being; as foundation-stones they are deep, and as being deep they are withdrawn from view; but time is their witness and their friend, and in the final distribution of posthumous fame Lord Aberdeen has nothing to forfeit, he has only to receive. I see, on perusing what I have written, that in the endeavour to set forth the virtues and great qualities of Lord Aberdeen, I seem more or less to disparage other men, including Sir Robert Peel, whom he so much esteemed and loved. I had no such intention, and it is the fault of my hand, not of my will. He would not have claimed, he would not have wished or borne, that others should claim for him superiority, or even parity in all points with all his contemporaries. But there was a certain region of character that was, so to speak, all his own; and there other men do seem more or less dwarfed beside him. In the combination of profound feeling with a calmness of mind equally profound, of thorough penetration with the largest charity, of the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove, in the total suppression and exclusion of self from his reckonings and actions—in all this we may think him supreme, and yet have a broad array of good and noble qualities in which he may have shared variously with others. There are other secrets of his character and inner life into which I do not pretend to have penetrated. It always seemed to me that there was a treasure-house within him, which he kept closed against the eyes of men.'

The delineation of so 'finely shaded' a character (to

use Mr. Gladstone's expression) would not, in any circumstances, be an easy task, but it is made more difficult by the fact, that both the public and the private life of Lord Aberdeen were, generally speaking, comparatively hidden. Of those who have filled situations so prominent, few have come less distinctly under public observation.

Lord Beaconsfield, in one of his novels—'Sybil,' I think—writes of Lord Shelburne as being among the 'suppressed' characters of English history; a phrase not perhaps altogether happily chosen, but by which it is intended to describe men of abilities and acquirements unsuspected by the general public, who exercised in their lifetime an influence of which the world around them, even in their own day, was but imperfectly aware, and of which, after their death, and that of their contemporaries who had felt its power, but few traces remained. Of such men Lord Aberdeen was emphatically one. Kinglake, whose researches among the papers of Lord Raglan, and acquaintance with the oral traditions of the period of Lord Aberdeen's Government, disclosed to him, as a fact, the position occupied by Lord Aberdeen among his colleagues and contemporaries, expresses in his 'History of the Crimean War' his inability to understand that position, and rightly assumes that it must be attributed to qualities undiscovered by the world, it not being, in his opinion, justified by anything which Lord Aberdeen ever did, or wrote, or spoke in public. And this opinion, so far as any single act, or speech, or writing of Lord Aberdeen's is concerned, is not altogether ill founded. There is nothing in his career to dazzle the spectator, nothing to command instant or excessive admiration. He performed no act which powerfully strikes the fancy, he made no speech which by its eloquence or wit imposes on the imagination. Neither the powers of his mind nor the charm of his per-

sonal character can now be appreciated, except either by those few yet remaining who lived in close personal intercourse with him, or by those who have had opportunities of studying, not merely a few chance specimens of his letters or speeches, but the mass of his utterances and writings, public and private.

What, then, were the causes which hindered Lord Aberdeen from taking that leading part in public life which might have been expected from such a man as he has been described to be? and why, if his influence was really great, was it so little visible? The latter question admits of easy answer. His influence was exerted over those who were themselves leaders of opinion and in direct relation with the general public, to which he was himself almost a stranger. But the reasons which led to his comparative abstention from an active part in English politics are not so manifestly apparent, and it will be necessary to dwell on them at somewhat greater length, if Lord Aberdeen's character and life are to be understood by the readers of this volume.

The exercise of power was not distasteful to Lord Aberdeen, but it was impossible for him to be eager in its pursuit or imperious in its possession. He estimated his own abilities humbly, and shrank with diffidence from pressing the adoption of his own views on others, even when he had no distrust of their soundness. He disliked and shunned publicity, and possessed no oratorical power. These circumstances in themselves are sufficient to account for his not taking a prominent share in the active struggles of English political parties, but they were not the only reasons which made it impossible that he should do so.

It is probable that the circumstances of his education had in more than one direction an effect unfavourable to his career. The ten years of his life from 1796 to 1806—

that is to say, from his twelfth to his twenty-second year—were passed in the closest domestic intimacy with Mr. Pitt, and under the commanding ascendency of that great minister. Accustomed to look up to him on all occasions, it became natural to Lord Aberdeen to recognise the guidance of external authority; and through life he was more inclined to defer, in action, to the advice of others, confidently given, than to rely on his own better judgment. It thus happened that men of inferior powers of mind, but of stronger will, not unfrequently imposed on him their views in action, without convincing his understanding. Again, this intimacy initiated him from his earliest years into the highest regions of politics and the inner working of the Executive Government, all the members of which were, in the familiar unreserve of private life, subject to his close observation. The natural result of such a training (as has been seen in other cases) is to induce comparative indifference to the lower walks and prizes of political life, and a habit of mind slightly contemptuous as to the more busy partisans in the rank and file of public men.

I am disposed to assign yet another cause for Lord Aberdeen's quiescent attitude in domestic politics. It is that with regard to them he was (though unconsciously) for the greater part of his earlier life in an essentially false position. Educated by Pitt and Dundas, married at twenty-one to a daughter of the Marquess of Abercorn, Lord Aberdeen grew up in the centre of the Tory party, and in habits of association and friendship with the leading members of that party and their families. He acquiesced in the main in their guidance, from which it would have required a breach with his closest personal friends to free himself; but it is clear that his allegiance was the result of habit, and something like indolence of will rather than of strong personal

conviction; nor did he shun association and friendship with those of Liberal politics. He was one of the most constant *habitués* of Holland House. He formed a part of the intimate society which gathered round the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Lansdowne, and other Whig magnates; and his correspondence shows that to some of his staunch Tory friends, such as Lord Bathurst, Lord Westmorland, Lord Castlereagh, and others, including even Sir Robert Peel, the (in their eyes) unorthodox character of his political opinions was a source of trouble and vexation; while, on the other hand, Liberals who associated with him on terms of intimacy were astonished (like Sir Robert Wilson) by the discovery that Lord Aberdeen was, all unconsciously, 'a true Liberal.' Of course, in estimating the Liberal tendencies of any man of the Georgian era, the date at which he lived must be taken into consideration. It would be as unreasonable to test the opinions of a statesman of the earlier years of the now expiring century by the political shibboleths of its last decade as it would be to gauge the views of a public man of Queen Elizabeth's day by the Revolution principles of 1688.

While the irresponsible political writer or speaker is bound by no restraints save those of logic, the action of a practical politician is limited by the prospect which exists of giving effect to his views. Whatever their abstract opinions, few men occupying high and responsible positions, or anticipating their occupation, advocate measures of which they know the adoption to be impracticable; for they are aware that in so doing they but waste their time and weaken their influence. Many of the reforms which we have since seen easily accomplished were altogether unattainable in the first twenty years of the present century, and there is no reason to suppose that they attracted any

considerable share of Lord Aberdeen's attention. In some respects, indeed, his views might seem inconsistent with Liberal opinions. He had no idolatrous reverence for parliamentary institutions, as they exist, and still less for the system of party government. He was keenly alive to their weak points, regarding them as probably the best, but not the only, forms under which a free people could conduct its own affairs; and he thought them likely to undergo grave modification; for he foresaw—which few of his contemporaries did—that the growth of democratic influences would, in the end, destroy the independent power of the House of Commons as effectually as that of the House of Lords, though more slowly. Nor was he insensible to the dangers attending changes which, on the whole, he regarded with satisfaction. His faith in the wisdom of popular decisions on subjects but imperfectly understood did not equal his confidence in the soundness and honesty of the feelings which prompted them. He was fond of saying that, while the two most foolish measures of the first twenty years of the present reign—the Ecclesiastical Titles Act and the Crimean War—were precisely those which had been demanded with the most entire unanimity, the removal of the Roman Catholic disabilities could not have been effected had a previous appeal to a popular vote been requisite. At the same time, even a slight glance at Lord Aberdeen's career suffices to show how far removed he was from sharing the narrow-minded views of the Tory party of his time.

He was, almost from the first, a steady advocate of Roman Catholic Emancipation. The liberality of his views on foreign politics scandalised his diplomatic colleagues on the Continent, and those views were among the reasons for his refusal of further diplomatic employment when urged to take part in the Congress of Vienna. In 1814 he

had pressed on Castlereagh the claims of Poland to independence, and procured from Metternich the promise of the retrocession of those provinces of the Republic which had fallen to the share of Austria. In 1820 he was barely dissuaded from joining the Philhellenic Society, and was so dissuaded only by the knowledge that it would involve a breach with friends among whom he habitually lived. He drew from the Duke of Wellington a not very willing consent to the immediate recognition of the French Revolution of 1830. The 'Aberdeen Acts' of 1825 were the first blow struck against the Scotch system of entails, and acquire by their results a significance far from suspected by those who were induced to pass them, but which, there is evidence to show, was not altogether absent from the mind of their author. He gave, it is true, a silent vote with his party against the Reform Bill, but saw that its adoption was inevitable, and saw it without alarm; and at a later period, while Mr. Gladstone was still opposed to any further reform in Parliament, Lord Aberdeen was prepared to welcome a large extension of the franchise, and saw no serious objection to the adoption of the Ballot. His conversion to the doctrines of Free Trade probably preceded that of Sir Robert Peel; and his voice was the first, and, as it proved, almost the only one, given in Cabinet in support of the abolition of the Corn Laws when first proposed by Peel. So far back as 1844 he expressed opinions adverse to the continued existence of the Irish Church Establishment, and had shown marked disapproval of the traditional policy of England towards Ireland.

But there was a deeper cause for Lord Aberdeen's political inactivity than the influences of constitutional temperament, early education, and social environment. From an early period of his life a sense (never altogether absent, though

more or less strongly felt at different times) of the comparative unimportance, in the great march of history, of those events which seemed to his contemporaries absorbing and all-important, prevented his ever throwing himself into party contests with that earnestness and exaggeration of feeling which are probably essential to political success. He, of course, recognised that there were now and again moments of supreme importance, on the decisions of which the fate of future generations might depend ; but he far more keenly realised the truth that, speaking generally, the course of the world is not substantially affected by the adoption or rejection of particular legislative measures, or by the maintenance or abolition of such and such a part of the machinery of government, however great the interest such questions may momentarily excite.

Many prominent politicians (probably the great majority) sincerely believe that the contests in which they take a part really are (as they are often said to be) of 'unparalleled' importance, and that, while the party to which they belong is uniformly right in its conclusions and actions, that to which they are opposed is as invariably wrong. Even when these sentiments are not sincerely felt, it seems essential for party purposes to affect them. But to Lord Aberdeen it was as impossible to affect sentiments he did not really feel as it was to raise trifles of the hour to the level of events of world-wide or even national importance. He found it impossible to suppose that the parties of his own day were divided by a more accurate balance of right and wrong than those of other ages had been. He held, with the profoundest conviction, that posterity would recognise in them the same admixture of truth with error, the same blending of honest conclusions and erroneous judgment, the same alloy of selfishness and meanness, which have marked the

parties of the past, and will mark those of all future time 'No one is so good, and no one is so bad, as he seems, was one of his favourite sayings. He was, in this spirit, almost always ready to place the most favourable interpretation on the acts and professions of political opponents and personal antagonists. Indeed it cannot, I think, be denied that he carried this disposition to excess, and that his habitually indulgent judgment (or, at least, treatment) of others was a weakness, sometimes attended with unfortunate results; while his tendency to minimise the importance of any given course of action as of real moment may have involved, on more than one occasion, mischief to the public interests, and injury to his own fame. Nor can it be doubted that the dominion of such sentiments not only barred him from the eager pursuit of power, but when, without seeking it, power fell into his hands, went far to render its long retention by him impossible.

At the same time, this defect was nearly connected with that perfect toleration which on all questions, whether civil or religious, he both felt and practised. When, in 1850, Lord John Russell obeyed, and stimulated, the popular demand for legislation inconsistent with the spirit of the Roman Catholic Emancipation Act, Lord Aberdeen, with a full knowledge of the unpopularity he incurred, and in the firm belief that he was thereby excluding himself for ever from official life, led the opposition to the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill,—a measure which its author himself lived to regret, and to see repealed. His grounds for resentment against the Scotch Free Church leaders were numerous, but he busied himself to procure sites for their schools and churches, when difficulties were interposed in the way of their acquisition. His respect for opinions which he did not share was sincere, and his forgiveness of political injuries

was complete. In 1846 he exerted himself to make the appointment of Lord Palmerston as Foreign Secretary acceptable at Continental courts, with an earnestness which he himself doubted whether Palmerston would understand, and which, in the like case, Palmerston probably would not have shown. And when, in 1855, he was succeeded as Prime Minister, as he had been at the Foreign Office, by the same almost lifelong rival, he certainly took more trouble to facilitate the accession of the latter to office than he had ever taken to promote his own. Lord John Russell's sudden desertion gave him good reason to complain, but the complaint was never uttered.

In dwelling on the toleration shown by Lord Aberdeen I have not only wandered from my immediate subject—the causes of his obscurity before the public—but have been led to touch on qualities which belong to personal character rather than to public life.

The private life of Lord Aberdeen was hardly less marked by reticence and silence than his public career. The almost feminine tenderness of his disposition was hidden under a cold and somewhat stern exterior. Even among his own relations there were those who never penetrated beneath the surface, and deemed him the proud, impassive man the world supposed him to be. He stood aside, perhaps too decidedly, from what appeared to him unprofitable intercourse, and thereby naturally incurred misconstruction and resentment. He seemed desirous of influencing only those who could understand him, though, when he did exert himself to charm or persuade, he was almost invariably successful.

Whatever may have been the case in earlier years, his stores of various knowledge were in later life but seldom voluntarily displayed, or his opinions on speculative subjects

expressed unasked. No man had less the temper of a proselytiser. The death of his idolised first wife—in his eyes 'the most perfect creature ever formed by the power and wisdom of God'—followed as it was by that of all her children, caused him grief never afterwards wholly absent, which seemed to have imposed on him habitual silence, and driven him to a life of habitual self-communion. His highly cultivated taste could not, of course, be hidden. His fellow-trustees of the National Gallery acknowledged in him one of the first of connoisseurs. Among the trustees of the British Museum, whose meetings he regularly attended, no voice had greater weight. Rogers consulted him as to the melody of his verses, Henry Taylor in the selection of the subjects of his poems. Nothing could be more curious than the way in which colleagues and friends, whenever at a loss, came to him for information on the most varied topics, and rarely came in vain. But while ever ready, without any apparent disinclination, to communicate to others the knowledge he possessed, his habitual attitude was one of reticence. He rarely spoke of classical or archæological subjects, though, if asked a question, he would with apparent ease, and without reference to books, resolve at once the most puzzling questions of ancient Greek currency or geography, or explain differences in the nomenclature of the inhabitants of the Demes of Attica. It was the same with the annals of European States, the genealogy of illustrious houses, the growth of schools of painting, or of typography; with every topic, in short, connected with art or history. His memory was a storehouse of the most varied and accurate information in almost all branches of literature. Those immediately about him were constantly surprised by some new discovery. The visit to Haddo of a friend of botanical tastes showed that the botanical

facts around him had been closely watched, although for years he had shown no evidence of such observation. He gathered for his visitor, as they walked along, every rare and curious plant, however inconspicuous or obscure, and knew exactly where every scarce moss or fern or flower was likely to be found. Day after day his eye must have noted, and his memory stored up these observations, of which he made no mention, even by a word, to the wholly unbotanical circle around him. On another occasion I remember my own surprise at hearing him quote, and discuss with Dean Milman, the later classical and Byzantine authors, with the same intimate familiarity as if they had belonged to the highest age of classical literature. Sir James Lacaita expressed amazement, as Silvio Pellico had done before him, at his unexpectedly thorough knowledge of Italian poets; and the casual remark of a French friend brought to light his singular acquaintance with, as M. de Barante phrased it, 'every French author who wrote before the Revolution.' It was not the possession of these stores of information, in which (though equalled by but few so busily engaged in public life) he was not singular, but their hidden possession, which was so remarkable a feature in him, and which must not be left unnoticed if he is to be truly understood.

Occupied as his public life chiefly was by foreign politics uninteresting to the mass of Englishmen, imperceptible to the common eye as was his influence, unostentatious as he was in the possession of his acquirements and in his mode of life, it is not surprising that Lord Aberdeen should have been misunderstood, underrated, and comparatively overlooked by the general public in his lifetime. Through life, it was the greatest and the best of those who knew him who esteemed him most highly. 'Lord Aberdeen is the most

entirely virtuous man I know—he has all virtues, I think,' said the Prince Consort to Bishop Wilberforce. 'Il est impossible,' wrote M. Guizot of him from Haddo, 'de laisser percer plus d'esprit et de cœur à travers des formes lentes, froides, et tantôt un peu embarrassées, tantôt un peu ironiques. Il a l'esprit aussi libre et aussi original que sensé. Il pense et s'intéresse à tout, sans avoir l'air d'y toucher.' The Duke of Wellington, a man not given to idle or insincere compliment, when urging him to undertake important work for which Lord Aberdeen thought himself unfitted, used the striking words, that he had shown that whatever he undertook he could do better than others; and Lady Peel, only a few days after her husband's death, wrote that Sir Robert Peel had 'always talked' of Lord Aberdeen to her 'as *the* friend for whom he had the sincerest affection, and whom he estimated higher than any other.'

Whether I shall have succeeded in giving to the readers of this volume a juster notion of his career than that prevalent among the public in his own day is, I fear, more than questionable. Confinement to the narrow limits of a 'short' biography is decidedly unfavourable to success in the attempt. Such a character is not one of which a bold and striking outline can be drawn in a few telling sentences. Its lights and shadows can only be painted by a multitude of delicate touches and the accumulation of many minute details. Any such accumulation the space at my command forbids. For example, those who read any small selection only from Lord Aberdeen's letters will not obtain the least insight into one of their most remarkable characteristics. Those who look into them for the scandal of the day, or for sharp criticism of his political opponents, will no doubt at once find themselves disappointed; but it is only

after reading, as I have done, many thousands of his public and private letters that it becomes apparent that they never contain any ill-natured remark about others, or any story told to another's prejudice. I doubt whether the same can be said of the correspondence of many other men, of whose papers, public and private, so large a portion has been preserved. I do not think this peculiarity was due to any formed and conscious resolution; it was the natural result of his habit and tone of mind. Again, the multitude of quarrels and differences, both among those connected with him and among comparative strangers, which he composed, cannot without tediousness, or indeed without impropriety, be recorded. And yet it is hardly possible to do justice to his love of peace, without some knowledge of his unsparing efforts to promote peace among others, and his own resolute avoidance of all strife or quarrel, even when he felt most keenly that wrong had been done him.

I have preferred, in what I have written, to use, wherever it was possible, the language of others rather than my own; for of all the difficulties which beset my task none are greater than those caused by the relation in which I stand to Lord Aberdeen. It is true that the gradual opening of my own mind, and the closeness of the intercourse between us, imperceptibly dissolved the reverential and distant awe which, I confess, was the attitude of my childhood towards my father. With sensations of surprise I continually discovered his possession of stores of knowledge previously unsuspected, and fresh beauties of character, each forging a new link in the chain of affection, till finally that perfect and rare mutual confidence was established which existed between us for the last ten or twelve years of his life, and which enables me to speak

with some decision both as to his acts and his opinions. But while I admit that circumstances have given me some special advantages for laying before the world a picture, however imperfect, of what Lord Aberdeen was, rather than a mere narrative of what he did, I trust that my readers will not forget the restraints which those very circumstances themselves impose. He who undertakes to write the life of a public man incurs obligations to historical truth which are paramount, and must at any cost and any risk be discharged. But the obligations of filial piety are not less imperative; and though in the delineation of personal character, if attempted at all, affection must not be allowed to conceal weakness, nor fear of the imputation of bad taste allowed to obscure merit, yet it can never be forgotten that censure or commendation of a father by a son alike tremble on the verge of disrespect.

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